

Section

1

The Civil Rights Movement



Section Audio



Spotlight Video

Essential Question

What were the legal and social challenges to racial segregation in the 1940s and 1950s?

Reading Guide

Content Vocabulary

segregation (p. 875)

integrate (p. 876)

boycott (p. 878)

civil disobedience (p. 879)

Academic Vocabulary

discriminate (p. 875) civil (p. 875)

Key People and Events

NAACP (p. 875)

Thurgood Marshall (p. 876)

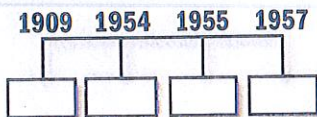
Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas (p. 876)

Rosa Parks (p. 878)

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (p. 878)

Reading Strategy

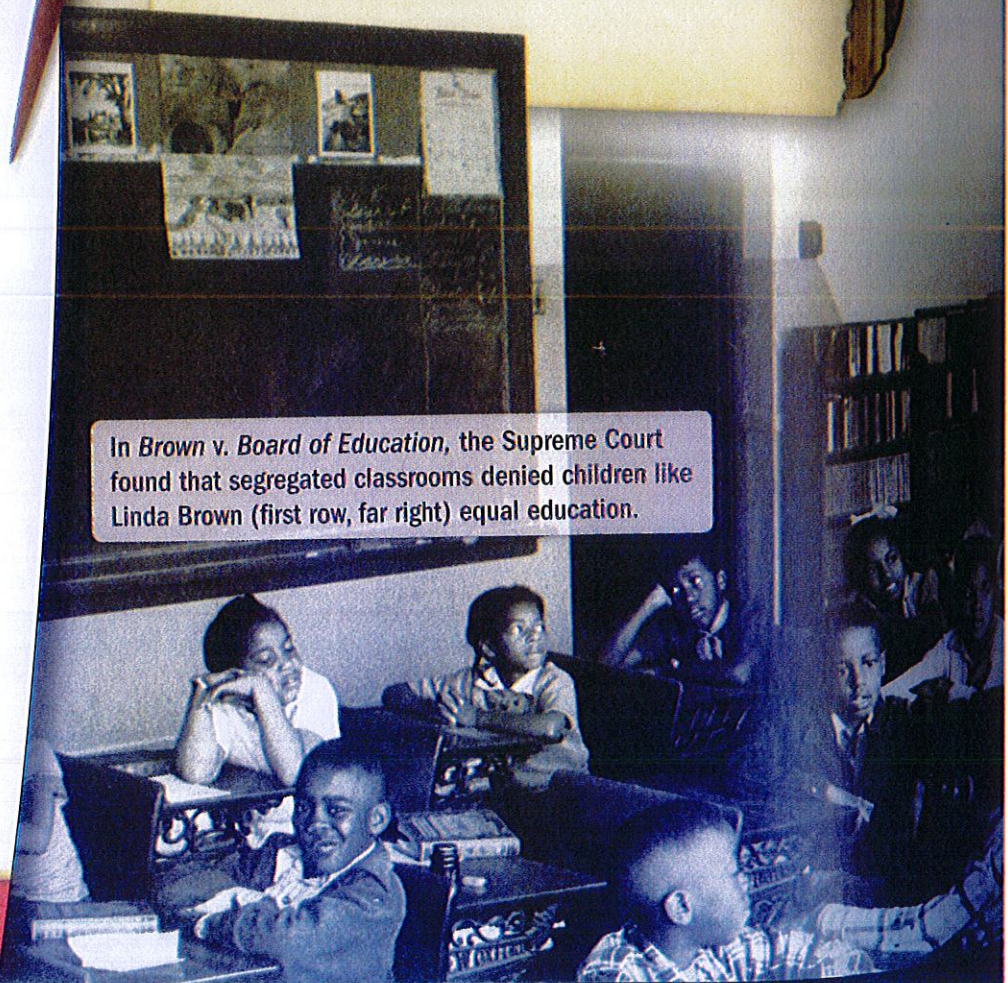
Taking Notes Create a time line like the one below to record important events in the early struggle for equal rights.



American Diary

Howard Bailey remembers that when the white high school got new textbooks, the old ones would be dropped off at his African American school. "I can remember that occasionally they would shovel the books out of the pickup trucks with coal shovels and just . . . dump them on the ground outside of the school building. So our teachers and principals would . . . gather them up and tape up . . . the books that were in real bad shape."

—Kentucky Civil Rights Oral History Commission



In *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court found that segregated classrooms denied children like Linda Brown (first row, far right) equal education.

Equality in Education

Main Idea After World War II, African Americans and other supporters of civil rights challenged discrimination in the nation's public schools.

History and You What might it have been like to be told that you could go only to certain schools because of your racial or ethnic background? Read to learn about the struggle to achieve equal rights for African American students in the 1950s.

African Americans had suffered from racism and **discrimination**, or unfair treatment, since colonial times. By the mid-1900s, many African Americans believed that the time had come for them to enjoy an equal place in American life. They fought for equal opportunities in jobs, housing, and education. They also fought against **segregation**—the separation of people of different races.

The Push for Equal Rights

During World War II, African Americans demanded more rights. Their efforts helped end discrimination in factories that held gov-

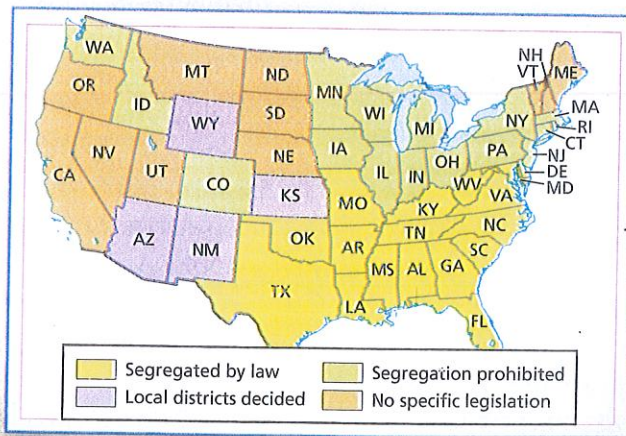
ernment contracts and increased opportunities for African Americans in the military.

In Chicago in 1942, James Farmer and George Houser founded the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). A year later, CORE carried out protests against public places that refused to admit or serve African Americans. CORE protesters successfully ended segregation in many restaurants, theaters, and other public places in Chicago, Detroit, Denver, and Syracuse.

When World War II ended, many African American soldiers returned home hopeful that their country would appreciate their loyalty and sacrifice. In the 1950s, when change did not come as quickly as desired, their determination to end injustices in the United States led to protests and marches—and to the rise of the **civil** (meaning, citizens as individuals) rights movement.

The **NAACP** (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) had worked on behalf of African Americans since its founding in 1909. In the 1950s, NAACP lawyers searched for cases they could use to challenge the laws allowing the segregation of public schools.

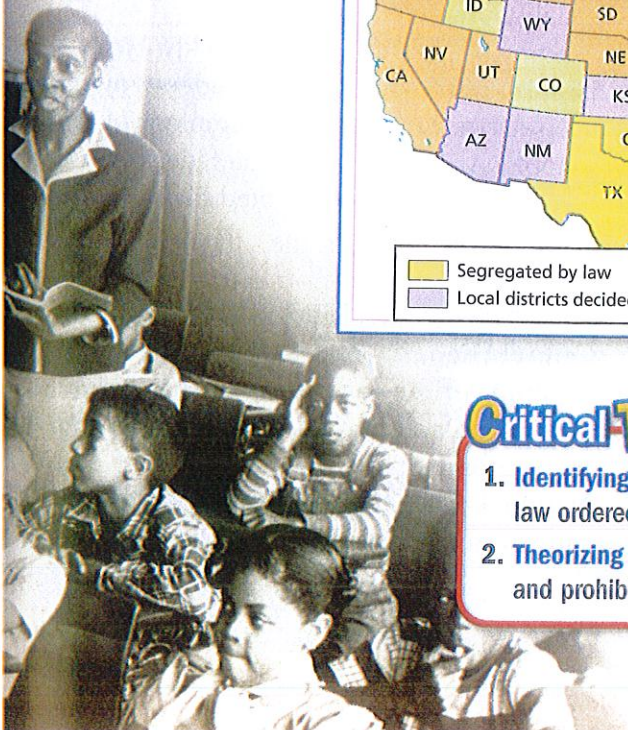
When and Where School Segregation, 1950



Regional Differences
School segregation was treated differently in various parts of the United States.

Critical Thinking

- Identifying** In which category did more states belong: those where the law ordered segregation or those where the law prohibited segregation?
- Theorizing** Why do you think segregation was widespread in the South and prohibited in the North?



The Brown Decision

The Supreme Court had upheld segregation laws in the past. In 1896 in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, it ruled that “separate but equal” public facilities were legal. **Thurgood Marshall**, the chief lawyer for the NAACP, decided to challenge the idea of “separate but equal.” Seven-year-old African American Linda Brown was not permitted to attend an all-white elementary school just blocks from her house. She was told to attend an all-African American school across town. The Brown family sued the school system but lost. Marshall and the NAACP appealed the case all the way to the Supreme Court.

The case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, combined with similar cases, reached the Supreme Court in December 1952. Marshall argued that segregated schools were not and could not be equal to white schools. Thus segregated schools violated the Fourteenth Amendment.

On May 17, 1954, the Court unanimously ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, that it was unconstitutional to separate schoolchildren by race. The *Brown* decision reversed the Court’s decision in the earlier *Plessy v. Ferguson* case. Chief Justice Earl Warren summed up the Court’s new ruling when he wrote:

PRIMARY SOURCE

“In the field of public education, the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently [essentially] unequal.”

—from *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*

Integrating the Schools

The Court’s decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* applied only to public schools. However, it had the much greater effect of threatening the entire system of segregation. The ruling convinced many African Americans that the time had come to oppose other forms of discrimination as well. At the same time, the Court’s decision angered many

Primary Source School Integration

“In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, . . . must be made available to all on equal terms.”

—*Brown v. Board of Education*

The Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. Some segregated school districts integrated their schools quickly and with no incident. Other attempts to integrate led to anger and opposition. Many schools kept their schools segregated for many years.



◀ Linda Brown was at the center of the *Brown* decision.

white Southerners, who became more determined to defend segregation, no matter what the Supreme Court ruled.

In 1955 the Supreme Court followed up its decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* with another ruling. It called on school authorities to make plans for **integrating**—bringing races together—in public schools. The Court also ordered that integration was to be carried out “with all deliberate speed”—as fast as reasonably possible.

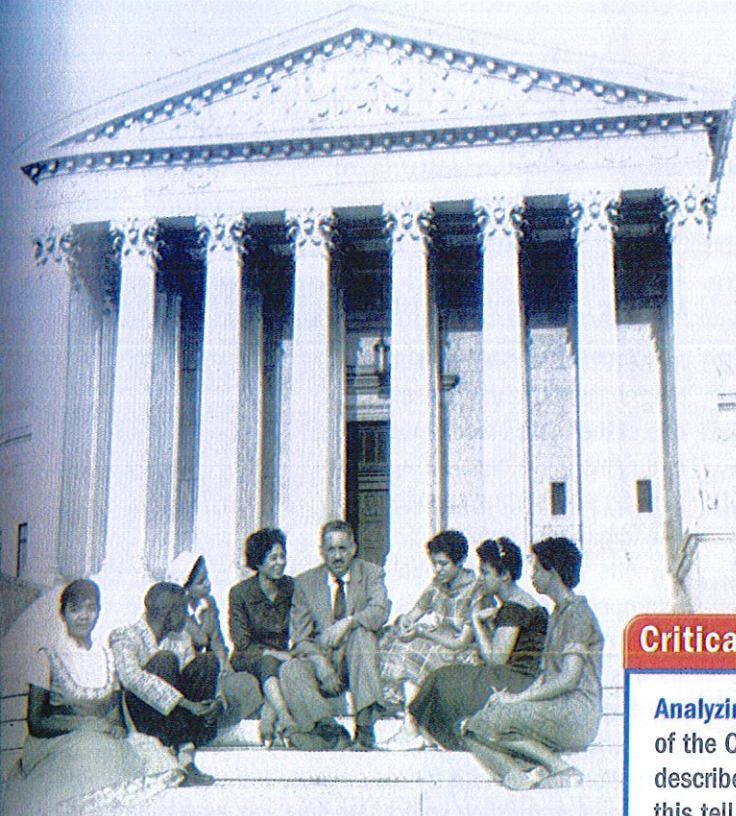
Some schools integrated quickly. However, in parts of the South, local leaders vowed to keep African American children out of white schools. A clash between the federal government and these states seemed likely.

Confrontation in Little Rock

In 1957 a federal judge ordered all-white Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, to admit African American students. Arkansas governor Orval Faubus opposed integration. In September he called out the state’s National Guard to prevent African Americans from entering the high school.

◀ Thurgood Marshall, center, is surrounded by students as he sits on the steps of the Supreme Court Building in Washington.

Elizabeth Eckford braves insults to enter Central High School in Little Rock. ▼



Critical Thinking

Analyzing Primary Sources Study the photograph of the Central High students. How would you describe Elizabeth Eckford's conduct? What might this tell you about her character?

On the first day of classes, armed members of the National Guard blocked the school's entrance and turned away nine African American students. One of them, 15-year-old Elizabeth Eckford, recalled that when she tried to squeeze past a member of the guard, "He raised his bayonet, and then the other guards moved in and raised their bayonets."

For the first time since the Civil War, a Southern state defied the federal government. Although Eisenhower had doubts about the *Brown* decision, he believed he had to enforce the law. The president warned Faubus that if the students were not admitted, the federal government would act.

When a federal judge ruled that the governor had violated the law, Faubus removed the National Guard. Eisenhower sent hundreds of soldiers to Little Rock to patrol the school and protect the students. Shielded by federal troops, the African American students entered the school.

Reading Check **Explaining** How had the *Plessy* ruling contributed to segregation?

Gains on Other Fronts

Main Idea The success of the Montgomery bus boycott showed that nonviolent protest could help African Americans secure their rights.

History and You Have you ever tried hard to win over someone to your point of view? Read to learn how African Americans convinced officials in Montgomery, Alabama, to end segregation on city buses.

While school integration continued, African Americans made other advances in securing their rights. More and more took part in a movement dedicated to securing fair and equal treatment. In 1955, events in Montgomery, Alabama, sparked a chain reaction—the beginning of a mass movement that would change American society over the next 20 years.

History ONLINE

Student Web Activity Visit glencoe.com and complete the Chapter 28 Web Activity about school integration.

People IN HISTORY

Rosa Parks

1913–2005

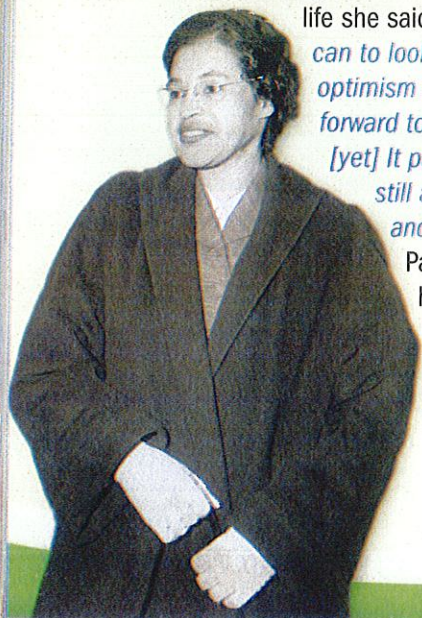
Civil Rights Activist

Parks was a civil rights activist as early as the 1940s, but it was her role in the Montgomery bus boycott that ushered in an era of real change for African Americans. Late in

life she said: *"I do the very best I can to look upon life with optimism and hope and looking forward to a better day. . . .*

[yet] It pains me that there is still a lot of Klan activity and racism." In 1999

Parks was awarded the highest civilian award in the country, the Congressional Gold Medal.



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

1929–1968

Minister, Civil Rights Activist

In the 1950s, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., established himself as one of the main leaders of the civil rights movement. A Baptist minister and stirring speaker, King organized marches, boycotts, and demonstrations that opened many people's eyes to the need for change. In 1964

he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. He said, *"I have the audacity [boldness] to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits."* Dr. King was assassinated in 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee.



CRITICAL Thinking

Inferring What do the statements by Parks and King have in common?

The Montgomery Bus Boycott

On the evening of December 1, 1955, **Rosa Parks**, an African American, boarded a bus in downtown Montgomery, Alabama. Parks, a seamstress, was secretary of the local chapter of the NAACP. She found an empty seat in the section reserved for whites.

When white passengers entered the bus, the driver told Parks to move to the rear of the bus. Parks refused. At the next bus stop, she was taken off the bus by police, arrested for breaking the law, and fined \$10. The episode could have ended there—but it did not.

Rosa Parks's arrest led African Americans in Montgomery to organize a **boycott**—a refusal to use—the city's buses. The boycott organizers hoped to hurt the city financially and force

it to alter its policies. They had strength in numbers—almost 75 percent of the bus company's riders were African American.

At a boycott meeting, a young Baptist minister came forward to speak. Not widely known at the time, **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**, made an impact on the crowd. He declared:

PRIMARY SOURCE

"We are here . . . because first and foremost we are American citizens and we are determined to apply our citizenship to the fullness of its meaning. . . . And you know, . . . there comes a time when people get tired of being trampled over by the iron feet of oppression."

—from *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*

The boycott upset many people's daily lives, but the African Americans of Montgomery pulled together to make it work.

Students hitchhiked to school; workers walked or rode bikes to their jobs. Dr. King helped organize car pools to shuttle people from place to place.

The bus boycott lasted for more than a year. City officials arrested Dr. King and other leaders at different times, but African Americans held firm. The local bus company lost thousands of dollars in fares, and downtown businesses lost customers. Finally, the Supreme Court settled the matter by ruling that the Montgomery bus segregation law was unconstitutional. In December 1956, the boycott ended.

Nonviolent Protest

With the victory in Montgomery, Dr. King became a leader of the civil rights movement. He followed the tactics of A. Philip Randolph, the nation's most prominent African American labor leader. Dr. King was also strongly influenced by Mohandas Gandhi, who used nonviolent protest to help India gain independence from Great Britain. In keeping with his beliefs, Gandhi used protest methods based on **civil disobedience**, or the refusal to obey laws that are considered unjust. Like

Gandhi, Dr. King encouraged his followers to disobey unjust laws without using violence. Believing in people's ability to change themselves, he was certain that the American people would eventually convince the government to end segregation.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was not the only prominent minister in the bus boycott. Many of the other leaders were African American ministers. The boycott could not have succeeded without the support of the African American churches in the city.

In January 1957, Dr. King and 60 other ministers started a new organization called the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). SCLC leaders also emphasized nonviolent protest. They showed civil rights workers how to protect themselves from violent attacks. The SCLC also discussed how to identify targets for protests and how to organize people for support. In taking these steps, the SCLC prepared African Americans for the struggle for equal rights.

 **Reading Check** **Describing** How did the Montgomery bus boycott lead to a change in policy?

Section 1 Review

History ONLINE
Study Central™ To review this section, go to glencoe.com.

Vocabulary

1. Write a paragraph using each of the following terms: *discriminate*, *segregation*, *civil*, *integrate*, *boycott*, *civil disobedience*.

Main Ideas

2. **Comparing** What was the major difference in the ruling of *Plessy v. Ferguson* and *Brown v. Board of Education*?
3. **Describing** What impact did the Montgomery bus boycott have on securing equal rights for African Americans?

Critical Thinking

4. **Sequencing** On a time line like the one below, sequence the events that led to integration in Little Rock.



5. **Analyzing** What effect did Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., have on the growth of the civil rights movement?

6. **Persuasive Writing** Take the role of a newspaper editor. Write an editorial that persuades the residents of your city to reject racial segregation.

7. Answer the Essential Question

What were the legal and social challenges to racial segregation in the 1940s and 1950s?