

The Struggle Continues

Section
AudioSpotlight
Video

Essential Question

What areas of civil rights did groups try to improve in the 1960s, and what methods did those groups use?

Reading Guide

Content Vocabulary

sit-in (p. 885) interstate (p. 886)

Academic Vocabulary

register (p. 889) emerge (p. 890)

Key People and Events

Ella Baker (p. 885)

Robert Kennedy (p. 885)

James Meredith (p. 886)

George Wallace (p. 886)

Medgar Evers (p. 886)

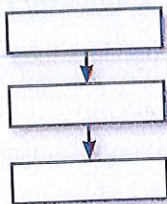
Voting Rights Act of 1965 (p. 889)

Malcolm X (p. 890)

Reading Strategy

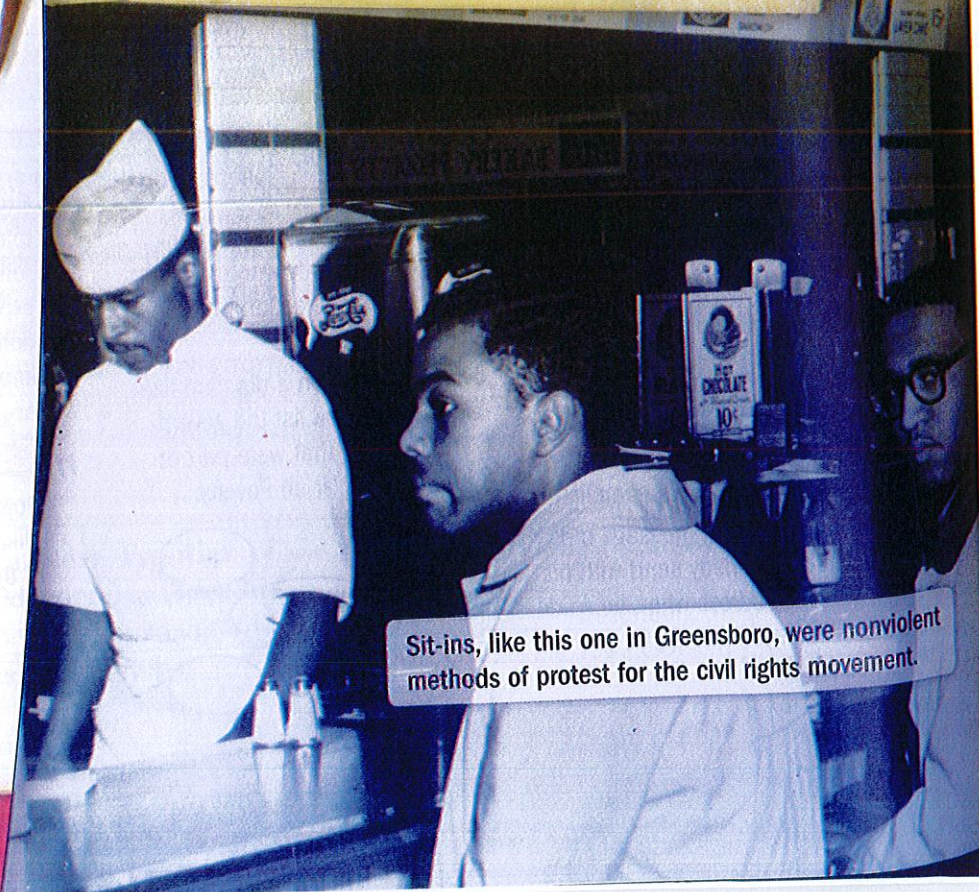
Taking Notes Create a diagram to show the major chain of events for the Freedom Riders in 1961.

Freedom Riders



American Diary

On February 1, 1960, four African American students walked into a store in Greensboro, North Carolina. Sitting down at a "whites-only" lunch counter, they were refused service. The students stayed at the counter until the store closed, then stated that they would sit at the counter every day until they were given the same service as white customers. News of the sit-ins spread rapidly. Other students followed their example. Starting with just four students, a new American mass movement for civil rights began.



Sit-ins, like this one in Greensboro, were nonviolent methods of protest for the civil rights movement.

The Movement Grows

Main Idea New leaders and groups emerged as the civil rights movement took on new causes.

History and You What do you do if you think you are not being treated fairly? How do you speak out? Read on to learn what actions African Americans took in the 1960s to secure their rights.

A new wave of civil rights activity swept across the nation during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Early activity targeted segregation in the South. Segregation existed in the North as well.

In Northern urban areas, African Americans and whites often lived in different neighborhoods; as a result, their children often attended different schools. Soon African Americans expanded their goal to fighting discrimination and racism in the North as well as in the South.

High school and college students staged sit-ins in nearly 80 cities. A **sit-in** is the act of protesting by sitting down. Sit-ins were held throughout the nation against stores that practiced segregation. Store managers wanted to end the disturbances and loss of business. Gradually many stores agreed to integrate.

The sit-ins launched a new civil rights group, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Civil rights activist **Ella Baker** was a guiding spirit behind SNCC and one of its organizers. Earlier, Baker played major roles in both the NAACP and the SCLC. SNCC was a key player in the civil rights cause for several years.

Freedom Rides

The Supreme Court had ruled in 1960 against segregated bus facilities. Another civil rights group, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), decided to see if the ruling was being enforced. On May 4, 1961, a group of African Americans and white CORE members left Washington, D.C., on two buses bound for New Orleans. They called themselves Freedom Riders. The trip went smoothly until it reached Alabama, where angry whites stoned and beat the Freedom Riders.

Television and newspapers reported the beatings. The president's brother, **Robert Kennedy**, the United States attorney general, asked CORE to stop the Freedom Rides for a "cooling-off period." CORE leader James Farmer responded: "We have been cooling off for 350 years. If we cool off anymore, we will be in a deep freeze."

Primary Source Birth of the SNCC

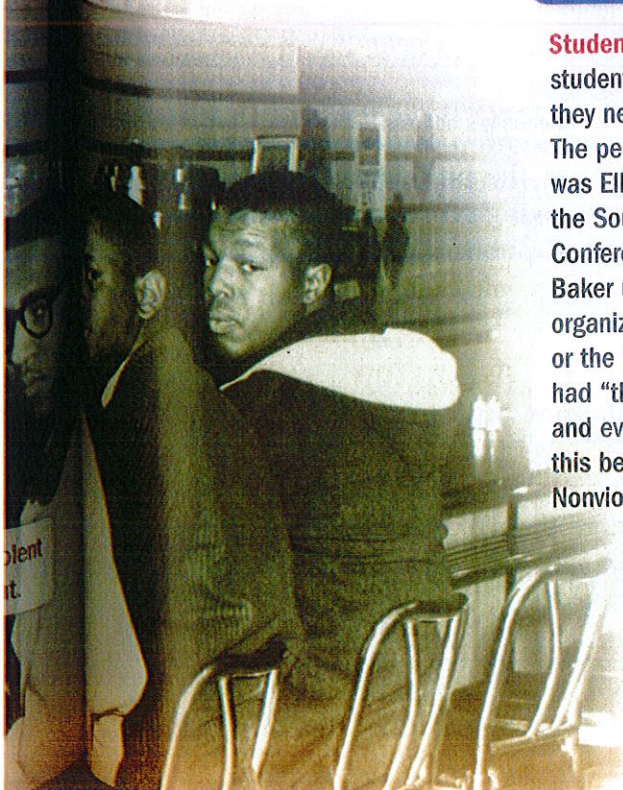
Students Organize As the sit-ins spread, student leaders in different states realized they needed to coordinate their efforts. The person who brought them together was Ella Baker, the executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). At a meeting in 1960, Baker urged students to create their own organization instead of joining the NAACP or the SCLC. Baker told them that students had "the right to direct their own affairs and even make their own mistakes." From this beginning was born the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

Ella Baker ▶



Critical Thinking

Explaining What was the purpose of sit-ins?



Violence and Arrests

The Freedom Riders pressed on, only to meet more violence in Birmingham and Montgomery, Alabama. No mobs were waiting for the Freedom Riders in Jackson, Mississippi. However, police, state troopers, and Mississippi National Guard units were everywhere. As the Riders stepped off the bus and tried to enter the whites-only waiting room at the bus station, they were arrested for trespassing and jailed.

Despite the violence and the jail sentences, more Freedom Riders kept coming all summer. In the fall, the Interstate Commerce Commission enforced the Supreme Court ruling, issuing new regulations that banned segregation on **interstate** buses—those that crossed state lines—and in bus stations.

Integrating Universities

African Americans continued to apply pressure to secure their civil rights. They spurred President Kennedy to take a more active role in the civil rights struggle.

In 1962 a federal court ordered the University of Mississippi to enroll its first African American student, **James Meredith**. However, Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett, with the aid of state police, kept Meredith from registering. When President Kennedy sent federal marshals to escort Meredith to the campus, riots erupted. A mob armed with guns and rocks stormed the administration building. The marshals fought back with tear gas and nightsticks. Meredith succeeded in registering, but two people were killed. Federal troops remained at the university to protect him until he graduated in 1963.

Another clash between state and federal power took place in June 1963 in Alabama. Governor **George Wallace** vowed he would “stand in the schoolhouse door” to block the integration of the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. President Kennedy, acting on the advice of his brother, Robert, sent the Alabama National Guard to ensure the entry of African Americans to the university. As a result, Wallace backed down.

Birmingham

In the spring of 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the SCLC targeted Birmingham, Alabama, for a desegregation protest. Police arrested hundreds of demonstrators, including Dr. King, but the demonstrations continued. During Dr. King’s two weeks in jail, he wrote the eloquent “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” in which he wrote: “We must come to see . . . that justice too long delayed is justice denied.”

National television carried vivid pictures of police setting snarling police dogs on unarmed demonstrators and pushing small children across streets with the powerful impact of fire hoses. President Kennedy sent 3,000 troops to restore peace. On June 11, 1963, in Jackson, Mississippi, **Medgar Evers**, the state field secretary for the NAACP, was murdered. The murder and the events in Alabama forced President Kennedy to make a decision. Appearing on national television, Kennedy spoke of the “moral issue” facing the nation:

PRIMARY SOURCE

“It is not enough to pin the blame on others, to say this is a problem of one section of the country or another, or deplore the fact that we face. A great change is at hand, and our task, our obligation, is to make that revolution, that change, peaceful and constructive for all. Those who do nothing are inviting shame as well as violence. Those who act boldly are recognizing right.”

—Kennedy’s address to the nation, June 1963

Days later, the president introduced new legislation giving all Americans the right to be served in public places and barring discrimination in employment.

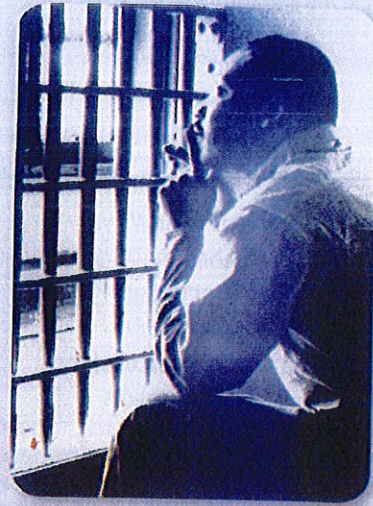
March on Washington

To rally support for the civil rights bill, Dr. King and the SCLC organized a massive march on Washington, D.C., on August 28, 1963. More than 200,000 people of all colors and from all over the country arrived to take part in the event.

Primary Source

Letter from Birmingham Jail

On April 16, 1963, from his jail cell in Birmingham, Alabama, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., used the margins of a newspaper and scraps of paper to craft a letter. The letter was in response to criticism from a group of white clergy, who wanted him to stop his nonviolent protests and his desegregation efforts. Dr. King's letter, which has been translated into more than 40 languages, serves as a stirring record of the Civil Rights Movement.



▲ Dr. King in jail

"We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God given rights. . . . We still creep at horse and buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, 'Wait.' But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate filled policemen curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an **affluent** society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six year old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, . . . then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. . . .

. . . Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their **scintillating** beauty.

Yours for the cause of Peace and Brotherhood,
Martin Luther King, Jr."

Dr. King is referring to the settlers who arrived, in what would become the United States, in the 1600s.

He was responding to those who said that African Americans needed to move more slowly in their efforts to desegregate.

Unequal opportunities, when it came to jobs and education, trapped many African Americans in a state of poverty. The frustration was increased by the fact that many whites had opportunities that African Americans were not given.

VOCABULARY

affluent (A•FLOO•uhnt): wealthy

scintillating SIHN•tuhl•AYT•ihng: sparkling, dazzling

Critical Thinking

Interpreting King's letter was seen as a source of hope for African Americans fighting for equality. How does the letter convey that hope? Give examples.

The Struggle for Civil Rights, 1954–1965

Sit-in at a lunch counter ▶

★ **May 1954**
Brown decision declares segregated schools unconstitutional

★ **Sept. 1957**
Federal troops escort African American students to desegregate Little Rock's Central High School

★ **December 1955**
Rosa Parks is arrested and Montgomery bus boycott begins



Rosa Parks ▶

★ **Feb. 1960**
Sit-in movement spreads after students stage sit-in at North Carolina lunch counter

★ **May 1961**
Freedom Riders brave violence to desegregate interstate bus travel

Nan Grogan Orrock has served in the Georgia Senate and House of Representatives. As a college student in 1963, Orrock describes how she felt at the march on Washington:

PRIMARY SOURCE

"You couldn't help but get swept up in the feeling of the March. It was an incredible experience of this mass of humanity with one mind moving down the street. It was like being part of a glacier. You could feel the sense of collective [united] will and effort in the air."

—from *Like a Mighty Stream*

About 6,000 police officers stood nearby, but they had nothing to do but direct traffic. There was no trouble. Proceeding peacefully through Washington with great dignity and joy, the marchers carried signs urging Congress to act. They sang songs, including the one that became the anthem of the civil

rights movement: "We Shall Overcome." Late in the afternoon, Dr. King delivered a powerful speech. He spoke to the crowd of his desire to see America transformed:

PRIMARY SOURCE

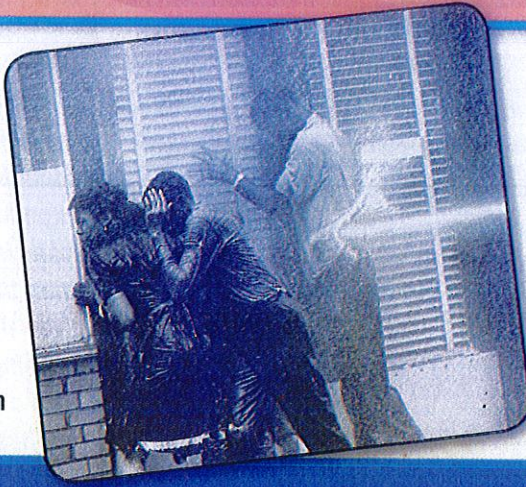
"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal!' . . . When we [let] freedom ring, . . . we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, . . . [will] join hands and sing in the words of the old . . . spiritual: Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

—from the "I Have a Dream" speech

Freedom Summer

Congress did not pass Kennedy's civil rights bill until after his death. President Lyndon B. Johnson persuaded Congress to pass the bill after he had taken over the office.

Birmingham police use hoses to force civil rights protestors to stop their marches. ▶



★ **Sept. 1962**
James Meredith tries to register at University of Mississippi

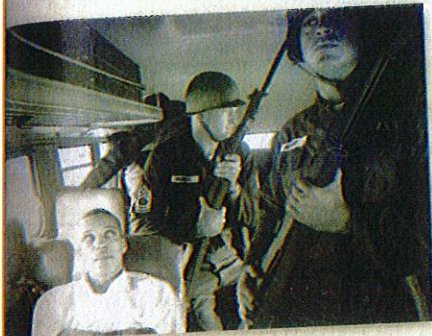
★ **Aug. 1963**
King delivers "I Have a Dream" speech during March on Washington

★ **March 1965**
King leads march in Selma, Alabama, to build support for new voting rights law

★ **May 1963** Police use force to stop Birmingham marchers

★ **July 1964**
President Johnson signs Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law

★ **Aug. 1965**
Congress passes Voting Rights Act of 1965



◀ National Guard escorts Freedom Riders

Critical Thinking

Analyzing What action did African Americans take in 1960 in the struggle for equal rights?

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed discrimination in hiring and ended segregation in stores, restaurants, theaters, and hotels. Yet, in many states, poll taxes and other discriminatory laws prevented African Americans from exercising their right to vote.

During the summer of 1964, thousands of civil rights workers spread throughout the South to help African Americans **register**, or enroll, to vote. They called the campaign Freedom Summer, but the workers faced strong, sometimes violent, opposition.

The Right to Vote

The next year SNCC organized a major demonstration in Selma, Alabama, to protest the continued denial of African Americans' right to vote. Police attacked and beat many of the demonstrators.

President Johnson stepped in. On March 15, 1965, in a televised speech, the president

urged passage of a voting rights bill. "About this there can be no argument," he said. "Every American citizen must have an equal right to vote." In August, Johnson signed the **Voting Rights Act of 1965** into law. The act gave the federal government the power to force local officials to allow African Americans to register to vote.

The act led to dramatic changes in the political life of the South. In 1966 about 100 African Americans held elective office in Southern states. By 1972 that number had increased 10 times.

After passage of the Voting Rights Act, the civil rights movement shifted its focus. It began to pay more attention to the problems of African Americans trapped in poverty and living in major cities.

✓ **Reading Check Explaining** What was the goal of the Freedom Riders?

Primary Source Malcolm X on Human Rights



"The common goal of 22 million Afro-Americans is respect as human beings, the God-given right to be a human being. Our common goal is to obtain the human rights that America has been denying us. We can never get civil rights in America until our human rights are first restored. We will never be recognized as citizens there until we are first recognized as humans."

—from "Racism: the Cancer that is Destroying America"

Critical Thinking

Interpreting What did Malcolm X mean when he said, "We can never get civil rights in America until our human rights are first restored"?

Other Voices

Main Idea Some African American leaders differed with Dr. King's strategy of nonviolent protest.

History and You What causes people to act violently? Read to find out why some African Americans took radical, even violent, stands during the mid-1960s.

By the mid-1960s, the civil rights movement had won numerous victories. Yet a growing number of African Americans grew tired of the slow pace of change and bitter over white attacks.

Malcolm X, born Malcolm Little in Omaha, Nebraska, **emerged**—rose up—as an important new voice for some African Americans. He was a leader in the Nation of Islam, commonly known as the Black Muslims. Malcolm X criticized the civil rights goal of integration, declaring that the best way for African Americans to achieve justice was to separate themselves from whites.

Malcolm X gained increasing support. By 1965, however, he began to change his ideas.

Instead of racial separation, he called for "a society in which there could exist honest white-black brotherhood." Soon afterwards he was killed by a rival group among the Black Muslims. His fiery words and passionate ideas, contained in his writings, continued to influence the civil rights movement after his death.

Black Power

Other African American leaders embraced more radical approaches. Stokely Carmichael, who became the leader of SNCC, advanced the idea of Black Power. This was a philosophy of racial pride that said African Americans should create their own culture and political institutions. Carmichael and other radicals called at times for revolution, a complete transformation of society. Although rejected by groups such as the NAACP, the idea of Black Power had a great impact on the civil rights movement. It became popular in the poor urban neighborhoods where many African Americans lived.

In Oakland, California, young radicals formed the Black Panther Party. The Panthers symbolized growing tension between African Americans and urban police. Large numbers of urban African Americans felt frustrated about poverty and a lack of jobs. The Panthers demanded reforms and armed themselves. Several clashes with the police occurred.

Violence Erupts

The first major urban riots since the 1940s took place in the summer of 1965 in the Watts section of Los Angeles. In a week of rioting, 34 people died and much of Watts burned to the ground. National Guard troops were called in to end the uprising.

The Watts riot was the first of a series of racial disorders that hit cities in the summers of 1965, 1966, and 1967. In July 1967, five days of protests, looting, and burning in Newark, New Jersey, ended with the deaths of 26 people and more than \$10 million in damage. The next week, an uprising in Detroit shut down the city for several days. The governor of Michigan, who viewed the burning city from a helicopter, remarked that Detroit looked like “a city that had been

bombed.” President Johnson named a commission to study the causes of the riots and to suggest steps to improve conditions. The report of this group, the Kerner Commission, warned that “our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal.”

Dr. King Is Assassinated

On April 4, 1968, racial tension in the United States took another tragic turn. On that night in Memphis, Tennessee, an assassin shot and killed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. His murder set off riots in more than 100 cities. Fires burned in the nation’s capital, just blocks from the White House.

Thousands of people attended Dr. King’s funeral in Atlanta. Millions more watched on television. All mourned the death of an American hero who, the night before his death, said God “has allowed me to go up to the mountain, and I’ve seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land!”

Reading Check Explaining Why did some African Americans criticize integration?

Section 3 Review

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

Vocabulary

- Use each of the terms in a sentence that will help explain its meaning: *sit-in*, *interstate*, *register*, *emerge*.

Main Ideas

- Discussing** What did the organizers of the 1963 march on Washington hope to accomplish?
- Identifying** Who was Malcolm X, and what was his philosophy?

Critical Thinking

- Analyzing** On a chart like the one below, list what each act was meant to achieve.

Civil Rights Act of 1964	
Voting Rights Act of 1965	

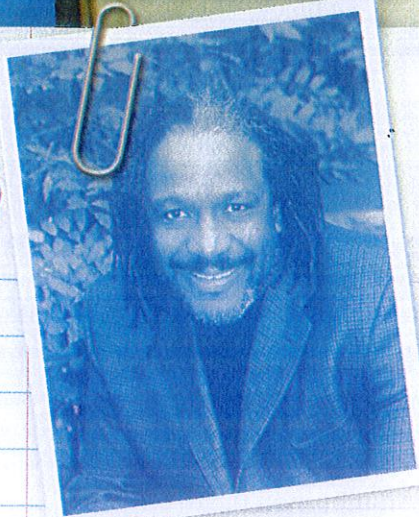
- Speculating** How would the civil rights struggle have been different if violence across America had not played a part in it?

- Descriptive Writing** Describe what happened across the nation when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated.

Answer the Essential Question

- What areas of civil rights did groups try to improve in the 1960s, and what methods did those groups use?

America's LITERATURE



Vocabulary

bobby pin hair clip

wall socket electrical plug

Meet the Author

Christopher Paul Curtis (1953–) was born and raised in Flint, Michigan, the setting for much of *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963*. Though the story is not autobiographical, Curtis admits that the characters are composites of his own family. Curtis was ten years old and living in Flint in 1963, when four African American girls were killed in a Birmingham church bombing.

Building Background

Nine-year-old Kenny and his family have driven from Flint, Michigan, to Birmingham, Alabama, to visit Kenny's grandmother. During their visit, white men bomb an African American church filled with worshippers. After the bombing, Kenny searches for his sister, Joetta, who was attending services that morning. Several days before the bombing, Kenny swam in dangerous waters and was saved from a whirlpool by his brother. In the rubble of the bombed church, Kenny faces the monstrous "Wool Pooh."



THE WATSONS GO TO BIRMINGHAM—1963

Christopher Paul Curtis

I started going to sleep under the tree and thought I was dreaming when the noise came.

I felt it more than heard it. The giant old magnolia tree shook one time like something had given it a hard snatch by the roots. Then there

was a sound like a far-off thunderstorm coming. Except it only thundered one long time.

It seemed like every animal and bird and bug in Birmingham stopped making noise for about two seconds. It seemed like everything that was alive stopped whatever it was doing and was

wondering the same thing: What was that noise?

Doors opened in the neighborhood and people came out and looked up in the sky but there was nothing there, not one cloud, nothing to give a clue to what the big hollow sound was, nothing but bright, hot, stupid Alabama sun. . . .

I leaned back against the tree and closed my eyes. I don't know if I got to sleep or not but Momma's scream made me jump nearly to the magnolia's top branch. I'd never heard Momma's voice sound so bad. I felt like I did that time I stuck a **bobby pin** in a **wall socket**.

I ran to the door and into the house and By almost knocked me over running back toward the bedroom.

"What's wrong with Momma?" I asked.

I looked in the living room but Momma and Dad weren't there. I ran back to the bedroom, where Byron was trying to wrestle into a pair of pants.

"By! What happened?"

He got the pants up and said, "A guy just came by and said somebody dropped a bomb on Joey's church." And he was gone, exploding out of the front door trying to zip up his pants at the same time he ran off the porch. . . .

. . . It looked like a river of scared brown bodies was being jerked in the same direction that By had gone, so I followed.

I guess my ears couldn't take it so they just stopped listening. I could see people everywhere making their mouths go like they were screaming and pointing and yelling but I didn't hear anything. I saw Momma and Dad and

Byron holding on to each other, all three of them looking like they were crazy and trying to keep each other away from the pile of rocks that used to be the front of the church. . . .

I got right next to where the door used to be when the guy came out with a little girl in his arms. He had on the same thing Dad did, a T-shirt and pajama pants, but it looked like he'd been painting with red, red paint. The little girl had on a blue dress and little blue frilly socks and black shiny, shiny shoes.

I looked into the church and saw smoke and dust flying around like a tornado was in there. One light from the ceiling was still hanging down by a wire, flickering and swinging back and forth, and every once in a while I could see stuff inside. . . . I could see a shiny, shiny black shoe lying halfway underneath some concrete, then it got covered with smoke, and then the lightbulb flickered out again.

I bent down to pull the shoe from under the concrete and tugged and pulled at it but it felt like something was pulling it back.

All the hair on my head jumped up to attention. The light flickered back on and the smoke cleared and I could see that hanging on to the other end of the shoe was a giant gray hand with cold, hard square fingers.

Oh-oh. . . The Wool Pooh.

Analyzing Literature

1. **Respond** What descriptions in the scene remind you that the narrator is a child?
2. **Recall and Analyze**
 - (a) What is the "red, red paint" on the man's pajamas?
 - (b) Who is pulling on the shoe besides Kenny?
3. **Evaluate**
 - (a) What does the Wool Pooh symbolize in this scene?
 - (b) Why might the author use the Wool Pooh, which almost took Kenny's life in the water, as a symbol at the church bombing?