

# Civil Rights Timeline

1619

The first slaves arrive in what is now the United States of America from Africa.

**Why were slaves bought to America?  
How did they travel?  
Did slaves exist before 1619?**

1862

Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation frees Southern slaves.

**Who was Abraham Lincoln?  
What work did slaves do?  
What is emancipation?**

1865

The Thirteenth Amendment to the American Constitution is made.

**What did this amendment state?  
Why is this significant?**

1875

The Civil Rights Act passes.

**What should this have meant in practice?  
What was the outcome?**

1882 – 1901

Lynching becomes epidemic in the South. Thousands of African-American people are murdered by vigilante groups.

**What was lynching?  
What is a vigilante group?  
Why were African American people being murdered?**

1883

A Supreme Court ruling reverses part of the 1875 act. The policy of segregation becomes widespread in the South.

**What is segregation?  
Can you think of any other examples of segregation?**

1896

The decision in the legal case of Plessy v. Ferguson means that idea of "separate but equal" is enshrined in law.

**What did "separate but equal" mean according to this case?  
What could be segregated?  
What other name was given to these laws?**

1909

The NAACP is formed.

**What does NAACP stand for?  
What does the NAACP do today?**

1946

The Supreme Court declares that segregation on buses that cross state borders is illegal.

**How were buses segregated?  
Were buses de-segregated after the ruling?**

1954

The Supreme Court declares segregation in schools to be unconstitutional.

**What earlier law from 1896 did the court overturn?  
Did schools immediately de-segregate?  
Are schools segregated today?**

1955

Rosa Parks is arrested.

**What did Rosa Parks do to get arrested?  
What protest followed?**

1957

Dr Martin Luther King Jr. becomes the leader of the Civil Rights Movement.

**What kind of doctor was he?**

1957

The Little Rock High School clash occurs.

**What was the clash over?  
What government organisation gets involved?**

1957

Civil Rights Act is passed.

**What was the outcome of the Act?**



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1960  
Greensboro Diner Sit-in.

**Who was involved?**  
**Why were they protesting?**

1961  
The Freedom Riders are arrested.

**What were The Freedom Rides?**

1962  
James Meredith attempts to attend Mississippi University.

**Was he successful?**  
**What intervention occurred?**

1963  
250,000 civil rights protesters march in Washington.

**Why did the protestors march?**  
**Did they achieve anything by marching?**

1963  
Four African-American children are killed in the Birmingham church bombing.

**Why was the church bombed?**  
**What charges were laid against the bombers?**

1964  
The Civil Rights Act is passed by Congress.

**What does this act state?**  
**How was this Act different from the one passed in 1957?**

1965  
Malcolm X is assassinated.

**Who was Malcolm X?**  
**Why was he assassinated?**

1965  
Dr Martin Luther King Jr. leads a civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery.

**Why did people march?**

1965  
The Voting Rights Act is passed.

**What did this mean?**

1967  
State laws forbidding interracial marriage are declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

**What did this mean?**

1968  
Dr Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated.

**Who assassinated Dr King?**  
**What was their sentence?**

1968  
Black Power protest at the Mexico Olympics.

**Who was involved?**  
**What did they do?**