

Y8 Term 6: Civil Rights in the USA - Key Words



Term	Definition
Abolish	To bring something to an end
Abolitionist	Someone who campaigned to end the slavery
Act	A bill that is passed into law. In the UK, this means that it has been passed by Parliament and given Royal Assent by the Queen. In the USA, a bill is passed by Congress & President.
Activism	Actions to campaign for a social or political change
Affirmative action	Giving disadvantaged people extra opportunities in education and employment in order to compensate for previous unfair treatment.
Amendment	A small change or addition. Under the US Constitution, Congress can add 'amendments' (changes or new points) to their Constitution.
American Civil War	A civil war (a war fought between people in the same country) fought between the Southern States (Confederacy) and Northern States of the US, 1861-65.
Bill	A proposed law. It is called an 'Act' once it is passed by parliament/congress.
Black Power	A black American movement from the 1960s that encouraged racial pride, self-sufficiency and militancy; this movement appealed to working-class black Americans living in northern inner-cities, where non-violent direct action had not been successful.
Boycott	To stop using a service / buying a product to undermine a business' profits.
Citizen	A person who is part of a state (usually born there) and therefore has rights and duties associated (i.e. the vote and taxes)
Civil liberties	Similar to civil rights. Personal guarantees and freedoms in relation to the nation state (where they live), so are legally enforceable. E.g. freedom of religion.
Civil Rights	The rights of a citizen of state to social and political equality, such as the right to vote, equal treatment by law, equal opportunities, freedom of speech, movement and religion.
Civil Rights Movement	The term used to describe efforts to gain equal rights for black American citizens in the USA. This is a 'long civil rights movement' that began in 1865, but gathered most pace (and media attention) between 1954 and 1965.
Confederacy	The group of southern states in the American Civil War that fought to leave the United States and keep slavery.
Congress	Similar to Britain's Parliament. It consists of The Senate (2 Senators elected per state) and The House of Representatives (several Congressmen elected per State, depending on the population of that State)
Constitution	An established set of principles (rules) governing a state. America has one. Britain does not officially. The closest we have to this is the Magna Carta.
Desegregation	Ending the segregation (separation) of groups based on race.
Discrimination	The unfair treatment of different groups of people on the grounds of race, age, or gender.
Disenfranchised	The loss of the right to vote
Disillusionment	A feeling of disappointment, when you discover that something is not as good as you believed it to be.
Emancipation	Being set free.
Enfranchisement	To be granted the vote or the state of having the vote.
Equality	The state of being equal (treated the same) especially in status, rights, or opportunities.
F.B.I.	Federal Bureau of Investigation; US agency set up in 1924 to investigate organised crime.
Federal Government	The USA, as a federation (group) of 50 states, has a federal government, which consists of three powers - the President, Congress (like Parliament) and the Supreme Court

Term	Definition
The franchise	The right to vote in political elections.
Ghetto	A part of a city, especially a slum area, usually occupied by a minority group.
Grassroots	When ordinary people form the basis of an organization's membership; when a protest or movement is led by a community of ordinary people, rather than individual leaders.
Human rights	Human rights are the inherent, natural, basic rights that belong to every person in the world, from birth until death. e.g. The right to life.
Inferior	Believing that someone is lower than you in power or status (opposite of superior).
Integration	The social mixing of people of different races and cultures; the opposite of 'segregation'.
Jim Crow	An 1830s minstrel black-faced racist character. After 1877, segregation laws in Southern US states were called 'Jim Crow' Laws.
Legal	To do with the law.
Legislation	Laws that have been passed by the government.
Liberty	The state of being free within society from oppressive restrictions imposed by authority on one's way of life, behaviour, or political views.
Litigation	The process of taking legal action.
Lynching	Killing, usually by hanging, someone without a trial.
March	A method of protest where a large group of people walk together in a public place.
Militant	Someone with extreme views who is prepared to use more extreme methods to achieve their aims, such as violence.
Non-Violent Direct Action	Sometimes called 'civil disobedience' or 'nonviolent resistance', methods of protest and non-cooperation without the use of force or violence. E.g. sit-ins or boycotts.
Precedent	A first; an earlier event or action that is regarded as an example or guide to be considered in the future in similar circumstances. E.g. lawyers and judges use 'legal precedents' to establish rules and decisions for future cases.
Prejudice	Judging someone before (pre) knowing them; based on no actual experience.
Racism	Believing that a particular race of people are superior (better than) to other races.
Reconstruction	1865-1877; the period and process of joining the Southern states back into the Union after the US Civil War.
Segregation	The separation of people based on race or culture, in facilities, transport and education.
'Separate but equal'	The legal justification for segregation in the USA, especially in education. This was a legal precedent set by the 'Plessy v Ferguson' Supreme Court ruling in 1896.
Sharecropper	Someone (a tenant) who works on land owned by a landowner. Instead of paying money, they pay the landowner a 'share' of the crop they've produced on that land. It is very difficult to make a profit in this system. Most emancipated (set-free) slaves became sharecroppers after 1865.
Sit-ins	A form of non-violent direct action that involves people occupying a public space as part of a protest.
Slum	Poor area with bad housing.
Suffrage	The right to vote in political elections.
Supreme Court	The legal branch of the US federal government. It is the highest court and rules whether actions are in line with the US Constitution and law.
Supremacy	Believing that you are superior (better than) to others in power or status.
White flight	When white Americans moved out of inner-city areas in large numbers, c.1950-1970. These areas were then only occupied by minorities and received less funding.

Y8 Term 6: Civil Rights in the USA – Individuals, groups and dates



Individual/group	Description
Abraham Lincoln	President of the USA 1861-April 1865; passed the 13 th Amendment (freeing slaves).
W.E.B Du Bois	Northern Civil Rights activist. Co-founder of the NAACP in 1909. He believed that 'the talented tenth' of the black population would lead the fight against Jim Crow and gain higher positions and education.
Booker T Washington	Southern Civil Rights activist who believed that it was best to accommodate whites until they were ready to accept integration.
Marcus Garvey	Civil Rights activist and founder of the 'Back to Africa' movement; founder of the UNIA (Universal Negro Improvement Association)
The Ku Klux Klan (KKK)	A 'secret' racist society of WASPs (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants) who wore white cloaks and carried out acts of extreme violence against the black American community. Describe its illegal actions, the society was legal because it was classed as a religious group. In 1925, over 5 million Americans were members of the KKK, including members of state government and the police.
NAACP	National Association of Coloured People. Civil Rights organisation founded in 1909 who fought against segregation through legislation (trying to get laws passed or ruled against).
Linda Brown	The schoolgirl who won the landmark Supreme Court case, Brown v. Topeka Board of Education in 1954. She was supported by the NAACP. This ruling declared segregation unlawful in education and was therefore a legal precedent (example) for future rulings.
Emmett Till	14-year-old boy who was lynched in 1955 in Mississippi, after being accused of offending a white woman in a grocery store.
Rosa Parks	NAACP campaigner who refused to surrender her seat to a white passenger on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama. This sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955-56.
Martin Luther King Jr.	Baptist minister, NAACP campaigner and later SCLC leader who led the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955-56, then became the spokesperson for the Civil rights Movement until his assassination in 1968.
Elizabeth Eckford	One of the 'Little Rock Nine', 1957.
Orval Faubus	Governor of Arkansas who closed Little Rock School in 1957 and encouraged white mobs to intimidate the nine black students attending. He was voted as one of 'America's Top Ten Most Admired Men' in 1958.
Eugene 'Bull' Connor	Police Chief who ordered fire hoses and dogs on protestors in Birmingham, Alabama.
SCLC	Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Umbrella organisation of Civil Rights activists. It's first 'President' was Martin Luther King Jr.
SNCC	Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee. Civil Rights organisation who led sit-ins during the 1960s. Its most famous leaders were Ella Baker and Stokely Carmichael.
CORE	Congress of Racial Equality. Civil Rights organisation founded in Chicago by James Farmer in 1942 and most famous for the 'Freedom Rides' of 1961.
Malcolm X	Originally Malcom Little, a member of the Nation of Islam. He is associated with Black Power and militant beliefs. He argued against King's use of non-violent direct action and argued that black Americans should defend themselves 'by any means necessary'.
Stokely Carmichael	First civil rights leader to use the term 'Black Power' in 1966. He expelled white members from SNCC in 1967.
The Black Panther Party	Militant self-defence Black Power group founded in 1966, famous for their black berets and military style uniforms. They carried out police patrols and organised community programs such as free breakfasts for school children.
Barack Obama	44 th and first black American President of the USA 2009-2017. He was elected in November 2008 and inaugurated in January 2009.

Date	Description
1865	Slavery was abolished in the US by the 13 th Amendment.
1877	End of Reconstruction Era. Last government troops left the South. Southern states began to impose Jim Crow laws shortly after this.
1896	Plessy v Ferguson 'separate but equal' Supreme Court ruling legalised segregation. This reinforced Jim Crow laws.
1909	'The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People' was established in 1909 and is America's oldest and largest civil rights organization. It was formed in New York City by white and black activists, partially in response to the ongoing violence against African Americans around the country. In the NAACP's early decades, its anti-lynching campaign was central to its agenda.
1933	Franklin D Roosevelt was elected President and introduces a 'New Deal' to bring relief and jobs to the unemployed.
1941-45	The US joined WWII. Troops fought in Europe (against Germany) and in the Pacific (against Japan). Regiments were still segregated.
17 th May 1954	Brown v. Topeka Board of Education Supreme Court ruling made segregation in education illegal and set a legal precedent for further progress in gaining civil rights. Oliver Brown, a black American, backed by the NAACP fought for the right to enrol his daughter (Linda Brown) in the local white school instead of sending her many miles to a black school.
August 1955	Lynching of Emmett Till, a 14-year-old boy who accused of offending a white woman in a grocery store in Mississippi.
December 1955 – December 1956	Montgomery Bus Boycott. Rosa Parks was arrested on 1 December 1955 for refusing to give up her seat to a white person. She was subsequently convicted, fined and lost her job. The NAACP organised a boycott of the buses using car shares and by encouraging people to walk. The boycott lasted 381 days. By the end of the boycott, the bus company had lost 65% of its profits and was forced to accept integration on state buses, enforced by the Supreme Court ruling Browder v. Gale.
1957	Nine black students exercised their right to go to a white school in Little Rock, Arkansas. Mobs threatened the students. The Governor of Arkansas tried to stop them. President Eisenhower eventually took charge and used his own soldiers to protect the students.
1960	Sit ins began at a lunch counter in Woolworth's in Greensboro when four students refused to move from whites-only seats. The movement rapidly spread (70,000 joined) and led to the formation of SNCC.
1961	The 'Freedom Rides'. Members of CORE rode the Greyhound bus route through the South to see if the bus desegregation ruling was being followed. The bus was firebombed at Freedom Riders were viciously attacked at Birmingham.
April – May 1963	Birmingham, Alabama marches, sometimes called 'The Children's Crusade'. King and SCLC led a series of events in this highly-segregated city. Teenagers were used in some marches and were attacked by police using dogs and high-pressure fire hoses. King was arrested and locked up in prison.
August 1963	March on Washington. 250,000 people, about one-fifth of them white, came to listen to speakers, including King's famous 'I Have a Dream' speech. Parts of the event were filmed live on TV.
June 1964	Mississippi Freedom Summer: Civil Rights workers went to help African-Americans to register to vote. Three of them were murdered, leading to an FBI investigation.
July 1964	The Civil Rights Act is passed, which ended segregation in public places and banned employment discrimination on the basis of race, colour, religion, sex or national origin. However, it lacked enforcement.
March 1965	Selma to Montgomery March. King, the SCLC and CORE took part in a series of marches from Selma to Montgomery to raise awareness of voting discrimination in Alabama (only 2% of black Americans had been able to register to vote in Selma). A white minister who joined in the marches was beaten to death. The most famous march occurred on 'Bloody Sunday', where marches were attacked on Pettus Bridge by police. Despite the Governor of Alabama (George Wallace) trying to prevent the marches, President Johnson declared his support for the march on TV and sent national troops to protect marchers.
August 1965	The Voting Rights Act aimed to overcome legal barriers that prevented African Americans from being able to vote as guaranteed under the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
April 1968	Martin Luther King Jr was assassinated. Riots broke out across the USA, with Washington D.C, Chicago and Baltimore most affected. Riots had already been building throughout 1965-8, in Watts, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland and Newark.
1992	The 'Rodney King' riots broke out in LA after motorist Rodney King was beaten by four police men. The incident was caught on camera by a journalist but none of the police officers were prosecuted for the offence. Riots led to 50 deaths and 2000 injured.
November 2008	Barack Obama is voted the 44 th and first black American President of the USA. He was elected in November 2008 and inaugurated in January 2009. He was re-elected in 2012.