

Study Guide



Chapter 29, Section 2

For use with textbook pages 873–880

CHALLENGING SEGREGATION

KEY TERMS AND NAMES

Jesse Jackson student leader in the sit-in movement to end segregation (page 874)

Ella Baker executive director of the SCLC, who urged African American students to start their own organization (page 874)

Freedom Riders teams of African Americans and white Americans who traveled through the South to draw attention to the South's refusal to integrate bus terminals (page 875)

filibuster a tactic in which senators take turns speaking and refuse to stop the debate and allow a bill to come to a vote (page 878)

cloture a motion which cuts off debate and forces a vote (page 878)

Civil Rights Act of 1964 law that made segregation illegal in most public places (page 879)

poll tax a fee that had to be paid in order to vote (page 879)

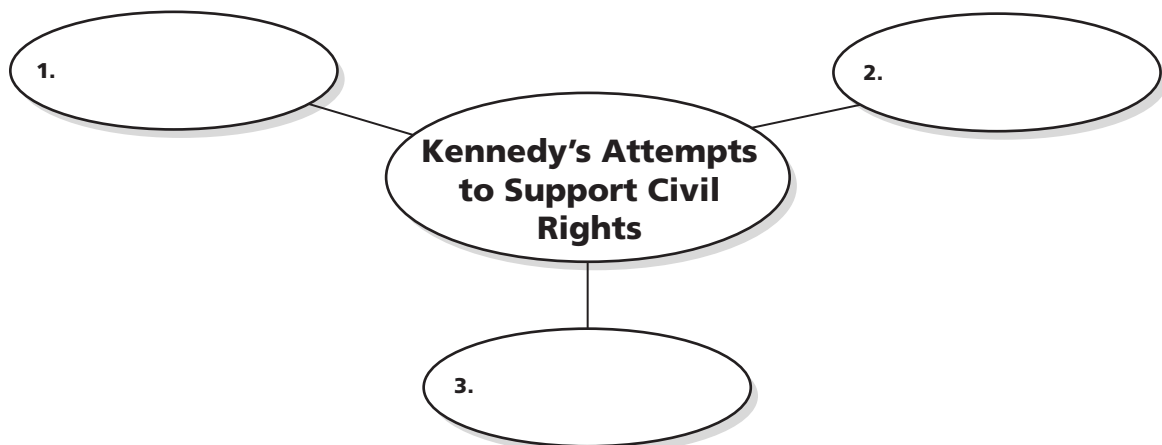
DRAWING FROM EXPERIENCE

What do you think of when you hear the words *civil rights*? What are your civil rights? How are they protected?

The last section discussed the beginnings of the civil rights movement. This section discusses the expansion of the movement.

ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS

Use the diagram below to help you take notes. President Kennedy attempted to support the civil rights movement in several ways. Describe these ways in the diagram.



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READ TO LEARN

- **The Sit-In Movement** (page 873)

The sit-in strategies to end segregation spread to several cities. Many African American college students joined the sit-in movement. Students like **Jesse Jackson** saw the sit-in as a way for students to take things into their own hands. At first, the leaders of the NAACP and the SCLC were concerned about the sit-ins. They feared that the students might not remain nonviolent if they were provoked. The students did remain peaceful, despite being punched, kicked, and beaten by bystanders. The students' behavior attracted the nation's attention.

4. What group of people did the sit-in movement draw?

- **SNCC** (page 874)

As the sit-ins spread, student leaders realized that they needed to create an organization of their own. **Ella Baker**, the executive director of the SCLC, invited student leaders to a convention in Raleigh, North Carolina, where she urged them to start their own organization instead of joining SCLC or the NAACP. The students established the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Among SNCC's early leaders were Marion Barry, who later served as mayor of Washington, D.C., and John Lewis, later a member of Congress. Although most of the SNCC members were African American college students, many whites also joined.

The SNCC was instrumental in desegregating public facilities in many communities. The organization realized that the civil rights movement focused on urban areas. As a result, members of SNCC began working to register African American voters in the rural areas of the Deep South. Three members who attempted to register African Americans in Mississippi were murdered by local officials there.

One SNCC organizer, a former sharecropper named Fannie Lou Hamer, had been evicted from her farm after registering to vote. She was arrested in Mississippi for urging other African Americans to register, and she was beaten by the police. She then helped organize the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. She challenged the legality of the segregated Democratic Party at the 1964 Democratic National Convention.

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5. Where did the SNCC focus its efforts?

• **The Freedom Riders** (page 874)

In 1961 James Farmer, the leader of CORE, asked groups of African Americans and white Americans to travel into the South to draw attention to the South's segregation of bus terminals. These groups became known as **Freedom Riders**. When buses carrying Freedom Riders arrived at various cities in the South, white mobs attacked them. In Birmingham, Freedom Riders leaving the bus were viciously beaten by a gang of young men. Later evidence showed that the head of police in Birmingham had contacted the local Ku Klux Klan and had told them he wanted the Freedom Riders beaten. The violence in Alabama shocked many Americans. President John F. Kennedy, who took office four months before the violence took place, decided he had to do something to get the violence under control.

6. What was the goal of the Freedom Riders?

• **John F. Kennedy and Civil Rights** (page 875)

In his campaign, John Kennedy promised to support the civil rights movement if he was elected president. African Americans overwhelmingly voted for him. At first, Kennedy was as cautious as Eisenhower on civil rights. He knew he needed the support of Southern senators to get some other programs he wanted passed. However, Kennedy did name about 40 African Americans to high-level positions in the federal government. He appointed Thurgood Marshall to an Appeals Court in New York. This position was one level below the United States Supreme Court. Kennedy also set up the Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity (CEEEO). Its purpose was to stop the federal government from discriminating against African Americans when hiring and promoting people.

President Kennedy was reluctant to challenge Southern Democrats in Congress. He allowed the Justice Department, which was led by his brother

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Robert F. Kennedy, to support the civil rights movement. Robert Kennedy helped African Americans register to vote by having the Justice Department file lawsuits throughout the South.

After the Freedom Riders were attacked in Alabama, Kennedy urged them to stop the rides. They refused to do so and planned to head into Mississippi on their next trip. To stop the violence, President Kennedy made a deal with a senator from Mississippi. Kennedy told the senator that if he used his influence to prevent violence, he would not object if the Mississippi police arrested the Freedom Riders. The senator kept the deal. The cost of bailing the Freedom Riders out of jail used up most of CORE's funds. Thurgood Marshall offered money from the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund to keep the rides going.

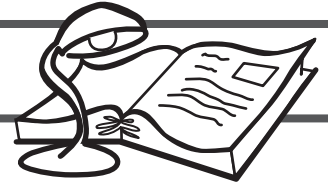
When President Kennedy realized that the Freedom Riders were still active, he ordered the Interstate Commerce Commission to tighten its regulations against segregated bus terminals. Robert Kennedy ordered the Justice Department to take legal action against Southern cities that continued to segregate bus terminals. All these actions were successful. By late 1962, segregation on interstate travel had come to an end.

At the same time that the Freedom Riders were trying to desegregate bus terminals, people continued to work to integrate public schools. In early 1961, African American James Meredith applied to the University of Mississippi. At that time, the university had avoided obeying the Supreme Court ruling that ended segregated education. In September 1962, Meredith tried to register at the university. He was blocked from entering by the governor of Mississippi. President Kennedy sent 500 federal marshals to escort Meredith. A white mob attacked the campus and a riot started. The fighting continued throughout the night. Many marshals were wounded. Kennedy then ordered the Army to send troops to the campus. For the rest of the school year, Meredith attended classes at the university under federal guard.

Martin Luther King, Jr., and other civil rights leaders were frustrated over the events in Mississippi. They were disappointed that the president did not push for a new civil rights law. When the Cuban missile crisis began in October 1962, foreign policy took priority over civil rights issues. King observed that the federal government intervened in civil rights issues only when violence occurred. As a result, King ordered demonstrations in Birmingham, Alabama, knowing that it would likely lead to violence. He believed that it was the only way to get Kennedy to actively support civil rights.

Shortly after the protests in Birmingham began, King was arrested. After he was released, the protests grew again. The local authorities ordered the police to use clubs, police dogs, and high-pressure fire hoses on the demonstrators. Millions of Americans watched the violence on television. President Kennedy was worried that the government was losing control, so he ordered his aides to prepare a new civil rights bill.

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7. Why was President Kennedy cautious about pushing for civil rights?

- **The Civil Rights Act of 1964** (page 877)

In June 1963, Alabama governor George Wallace stood in front of the University of Alabama’s admissions office to stop two African Americans from enrolling. Federal marshals ordered him to move. President Kennedy took that opportunity to present his civil rights bill.

Martin Luther King, Jr., realized that Kennedy would have a difficult time pushing his civil rights bill through Congress. He decided to support a massive march on Washington. On August 28, 1963, more than 200,000 demonstrators gathered peacefully at the nation’s capital. Dr. King delivered his powerful “I Have a Dream” speech, in which he presented his dream of freedom and equality for all Americans. The march on Washington had built support for Kennedy’s civil rights bill. However, opponents in Congress continued to do what they could to slow the bill down. The bill would have an especially difficult time passing in the Senate. Senators are allowed to speak for as long as they like when a bill is being debated. The Senate is not allowed to vote on a bill until all the senators have finished speaking. A **filibuster** is when a small group of senators take turns speaking and refuse to stop the debate and allow a bill to come to a vote. Today a filibuster can be stopped if at least three-fifths of the senators vote for **cloture**, a motion which cuts off debate and forces a vote.

African Americans became even more worried that the civil rights bill would never pass when President Kennedy was assassinated in November 1963. President Johnson, however, committed himself to getting Kennedy’s civil rights bill passed. On July 2, 1964, President Johnson signed the **Civil Rights Act of 1964** into law. The law gave Congress the power to outlaw segregation in most public places. It gave citizens equal access to facilities such as restaurants, parks, and theaters. The law gave the attorney general more power to bring lawsuits to force schools to desegregate. It also set up the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). This agency was set up to oversee the ban on job discrimination by race, religion, gender, and national origin.

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8. Why did Martin Luther King, Jr., support a march on Washington?

• **The Struggle for Voting Rights** (page 879)

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 did little to guarantee the right to vote. The Twenty-fourth Amendment, ratified in 1964, helped somewhat by abolishing **poll taxes**, or fees paid in order to vote in national elections. The SNCC and SCLC increased their voter registration drives in the South. Those that tried to register African American voters were often attacked and beaten. Some were murdered. Civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King, Jr., decided that a new law was necessary to protect African American voting rights. They decided to start their campaign in Selma, Alabama. The sheriff of that city prevented African Americans from registering to vote by deputizing and arming many white citizens. They terrorized and attacked the demonstrators. Around 2,000 African Americans were arrested by Selma's sheriff.

To keep the pressure on the president and Congress to act, Dr. King and other SNCC activists organized a march from Selma to Montgomery. It began on March 7, 1965. As protesters approached the bridge that led out of Selma, the sheriff ordered them to break up. While the marchers knelt in prayer, state troopers and the deputized citizens rushed the demonstrators. The attack left more than 70 African Americans hospitalized and many more injured. The nation was shocked as it saw the brutality on television. President Johnson was furious. He came before Congress to present a new voting rights law.

In August 1965, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. It ordered federal examiners to register qualified voters. It got rid of discriminatory practices such as literacy tests. By the end of 1965, almost 250,000 new African American voters had registered to vote. The number of African American elected officials in the South also increased. With the passage of the Voting Rights Act, the civil rights movement had achieved its two goals. Segregation had been banned, and laws were in place to prevent discrimination and protect voting rights.

9. What was the purpose of the march from Selma to Montgomery?
