

Test Date -

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Define the following terms (in your notebook)

Maggie Kuhn

AARP

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Thurgood Marshall

Integration

Brown v. Board of Education

Sweatt v. Painter

Jackie Robinson

Orval Faubus

Montgomery Bus Boycott

Rosa Parks

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Medicare

Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)

Civil Disobedience

James Meredith

Civil Rights Act of 1964

Voting Rights Act

Edward Brooke

Welfare

Earl Warren

Miranda v. Arizona

Tinker v. Des Moines

Judicial Activism

Mapp v. Ohio

Gideon v. Wainwright

Cesar Chavez

Hernandez v. Texas

American Indian Movement

Betty Friedan

Shirley Chisholm

Lyndon Johnson

"The Great Society"

"The War on Poverty"

Birmingham

Little Rock

Malcolm X

Stokely Carmichael

National Organization of Women (NOW)

"Jim Crow Laws"

ARTICLE

Harry S Truman and Civil Rights

Harry S Truman National Historic Site



Civil Rights advocates welcoming Harry S Truman
NPS

Given his background, Harry Truman was an unlikely champion of civil rights. Where he grew up—the border state of Missouri—segregation was accepted and largely unquestioned. Both his maternal and paternal grandparents had even owned slaves. Truman's background notwithstanding, some would say it was Truman who energized the modern civil rights movement, paving the way for future legislative successes of the 1960s.

Harry Truman's civil rights views as President surprised many because they seemed to contradict his upbringing. Truman grew up in a former slave state where his small-town, rural surroundings included segregation and subordination for many of its citizens. Black residents lived in a separate section of town, attended a different school, and were prevented from shopping at most stores. In his early letters, the young Harry Truman reflected on his background by frankly admitting prejudices against blacks and Asians. Despite all this,

Truman believed in fairness. While serving in Jackson County public office, he saw the plight of African Americans in urban areas.

Truman's experience as an officer in World War I and post-war business dealings with a Jewish partner also broadened his perspectives. By 1940, as he sought reelection to the US Senate, his viewpoint had matured.

In a speech in Sedalia, Missouri, he said, "I believe in the brotherhood of man, not merely the brotherhood of white men, but the brotherhood of all men before law. I believe in the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. In giving the Negroes the rights which are theirs, we are only acting in accord with our own ideals of a true democracy."



Independence, Missouri, as it would have appeared in Truman's youth.
NPS

After Franklin D. Roosevelt's death on April 12, 1945, President Truman directed the conclusion of World War II. Black veterans returning from the conflict found poor treatment at home. Truman conveyed his alarm, "My stomach turned over when I learned that Negro soldiers, just back from overseas, were being dumped out of army trucks in Mississippi and beaten. Whatever my inclinations as a native of Missouri might have been, as President I know this is bad. I shall fight to end evils like this."

Other episodes of violence profoundly moved Truman. In 1946, in Georgia, a mob shot and killed two black men and their wives. No one ever stood trial for the crime. In South Carolina, police pulled Army Sergeant Isaac Woodard from



a bus and beat him with night sticks permanently blinding him. These events left a deep impression on the President in a way that no statistics ever could. In late 1946, Harry Truman established "The President's Committee on Civil Rights." He instructed its members: "I want our Bill of Rights implemented in fact. We have been trying to do this for 150 years. We're making progress, but we're not making progress fast enough." The committee released its report in 1947. Entitled, "To Secure These Rights," it documented nationwide discrimination in areas such as education, housing, public accommodations, and voting rights.

On February 2, 1948, President Truman took great political risk by presenting a daring civil rights speech to a joint session of Congress. Based on the committee's findings, he asked Congress to support a civil rights package that included federal protection against lynching, better protection of the right to vote, and a permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission. These proposals met strong opposition in Congress and led to the splintering of the Democratic Party right before the 1948 presidential election. Truman won reelection, but little civil rights legislation was enacted during his administration. Instead, Truman turned to his executive powers and issued orders prohibiting discrimination in federal employment and to end segregation in the military. Previously, African Americans in the military served in separate units where they often performed minor duties and were commanded by white officers. On July 26, 1948, President Truman issued Executive Order 9981, ending segregation in the military and establishing equality of treatment and opportunity in the Armed Services. By 1954, the Army had disbanded its last all-black unit.



Harry Truman once wrote, "Discrimination is a disease, we must attack it wherever it appears." Through his efforts as leader of the world's most prominent democracy, he sought to improve the opportunity of each American to lead a successful life with basic guarantees of freedom. Some critics believe that he should have done more, while, at the time, others thought he went too far. Considering his upbringing and the climate of the times, Truman demonstrated a great deal of personal growth and political courage while in the White House. Although Truman never entirely overcame all of his personal prejudices, his heartfelt sense of fairness and his deeply-rooted faith in the US Constitution made him the first modern president to champion civil rights, paving the way for the legislative successes of the 1960s.

On June 29, 1947, President Truman addressed the NAACP's 38th Annual Convention, the first president ever to do so. An audience of 10,000 listened from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Truman declared that the federal government must "take the lead in guaranteeing the civil rights of all Americans." Truman Library

ARTICLE

President Eisenhower and Civil Rights

Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site, Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial, Eisenhower National Historic Site, Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site

The aftermath of the Second World War saw the world changed forever. The conflict illuminated to many around the world what was wrong with prewar societies and those people who had survived the conflict were strengthened with a new sense of self and purpose. African Americans who had served their country during the war were no longer willing to accept living in a country that saw them as second-class citizens. The "Double V" campaign was born around the idea of victory not only in war but at home over racism and inequality. The 1950s would see a dramatic push for equality across the nation.

Civil Rights was a polarizing topic across the country as post-war attitudes on racial equality and inequality began to change across the country. The Eisenhower administration was certainly aware of these currents and because the topic was on the minds of voters, it was a movement that Eisenhower and his staff could not ignore.

When Eisenhower entered office, there were already two important Civil Rights issues at hand. First, Eisenhower continued President Harry Truman's orders to desegregate the federal workforce and the armed forces. This process was essentially finished by the end of Eisenhower's first year in office. The second and perhaps more important element was in the hands of the Supreme Court. When Eisenhower became the 34th President, the *Brown vs the Board of Education* case was already before the Court. Ultimately, it would become the landmark Civil Rights case of the 20th century.

Eisenhower would have a major impact on *Brown vs. Board* through two important appointments. The first was in his choice of Attorney General, Hebert Brownell. Brownell was a supporter of civil rights and in his brief argued that any state mandated inequality that came about from segregated schools was unconstitutional and a violation of the 14th Amendment. Brownell was also instrumental in helping Eisenhower make judicial appointments, including his most important one.

When President Eisenhower appointed Governor Earl Warren to the Supreme Court as Chief Justice, it began a new era for the Supreme Court. Chief Justice Warren authored the *Brown vs. Board* decision in 1954, stating



Chief Justice Earl Warren of the United States Supreme Court.
Photo Credit: Library of Congress

the court's unanimous decision declaring state laws segregating schools were unconstitutional regardless of whether the segregated schools were equal in quality. The decision was a boon to the Civil Rights movement and one of the most important cases in the history of the U.S. Supreme Court.

After these major accomplishments early in his presidency, Eisenhower's administration seemed to lose steam regarding Civil Rights. Eisenhower himself was criticized for not making a stronger show of support for the Civil Rights movement or even the *Brown vs. Board* decision itself. After the *Brown* decision was announced, Eisenhower said "The Supreme Court has spoken, and I am sworn to uphold the constitutional process in this country; I will obey." This somewhat ambiguous statement has been interpreted as sign that Eisenhower was either for or against *Brown* and the broader Civil Right movement. Eisenhower kept his personal thoughts on the matter relatively quiet and continually dodged chances to make a strong statement either way.

While keeping his personal thoughts quiet, with the support of Brownell, Eisenhower was determined to push through a Civil Rights bill. The groundwork was laid during his first term in office, but the bill would eventually pass in his later years in the White House. During his State of the Union in 1957, Eisenhower emphasized the four points this bill would contain. It would, first, create a bipartisan congressional commission to investigate civil rights violations. Second, the bill would create a Civil Rights division in the Department of Justice under a new Assistant Attorney General. Third, it would empower the Attorney General to pursue contempt proceedings against anyone who violated civil rights stemming from the 14th Amendment and finally it would empower the Attorney General to do the same in connection with a violation of voting rights as laid out in the 15th Amendment.

This proposal was met with immediate backlash from Southern congressmen and the bill that would eventually reach President Eisenhower's desk was very different from the bill as it was first proposed. Sections 3 and 4 were essentially gutted. Eisenhower and his administration were devastated. Still, it was the first Civil Rights legislation in over eighty years. If nothing else it was a step in the right direction, a sign that times were

anging.

At the same time Eisenhower was signing the Civil Rights Act of 1957, the last major Civil Rights event in Eisenhower's presidency was beginning to unfold. In response to *Brown vs the Board of Education*, the Little Rock school board in Arkansas had decided on a plan for integration starting at the high school level and then slowly moving downwards. It was decided that black students would be allowed to attend Central High in the Fall of 1957. When the school year started, a white mob and the national guard blocked the students from attending. The crisis in Little Rock, Arkansas, where

nine black students were denied entry to Central High School would showcase what kind of leader Eisenhower was. At first Eisenhower was reluctant to intervene. He saw little benefit in the president involving himself in direct conflict with a governor. In meetings with Arkansas's Governor Faubus, Eisenhower left feeling that Faubus would resolve the conflict upon his return to Arkansas. When Faubus continued to deny entry to the students and the Little Rock district court handed down an injunction against him, Eisenhower then had the clear authority to act. He signed Executive Order 10730, which sent Federal troops from the 101st Airborne Division to stop the injustice that was playing out at Central High in Little Rock.

Eisenhower left the presidency with a rather cloudy reputation on Civil Rights. In the words of historian William Hitchcock, "Again and again on civil rights he expressed "moderate" opinions in the face of men whose views were immoderate. He sought gradual change where others sought immediate progress or not at all. He showed dispassionate common sense; his opponents fought with passionate zealotry."

For many reasons both personally and politically, Eisenhower could not be the leader that many people yearned for. Still, his administration marked a turning point in the Civil Rights movement. It reflected a society that was on the verge of change but was still turning the wheel of progress. His Supreme Court appointments had an impact that continued after his presidency, as did his actions in promoting the Civil Rights Act of 1957 and his intervention with the 101st Airborne Division during the Little Rock Crisis.

Suggested Reading:

Brownell, Hebert with John Burke. *Advising Ike, the Memoirs of Attorney General Heber Brownell* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1993)

Hitchcock, Williams. *The Age of Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2018)



President Eisenhower at a press conference in 1957.

Photo Credit: Library of Congress



^ JFK IN HISTORY

THE MODERN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION

When John F. Kennedy became president in 1961, African Americans faced significant discrimination in the United States. Throughout much of the South they were denied the right to vote, barred from public facilities, subjected to violence including lynching, and could not expect justice from the courts. In the North, Black Americans also faced discrimination in housing, employment, education, and many other areas.

Progress and Protests: 1954-1960

In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously in *Brown v. Board of Education* that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. Many southern political leaders invoked the tenth amendment or "states' rights" to justify segregation and claimed the desegregation decision violated the rights of states to manage their systems of public education. They responded with defiance, legal challenges, delays, or token compliance. As a result, school desegregation proceeded very slowly. By the end of the 1950s, fewer than 10 percent of Black children in the South were attending integrated schools.

The pace of civil rights protests rose sharply in response to the Supreme Court's decision. Martin Luther King Jr. led a boycott that ended segregated busing in Montgomery, Alabama. In 1957, National Guard troops under orders from President Dwight D. Eisenhower enforced the desegregation of Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas. But, even after Little Rock, school integration was painfully slow, and segregation in general remained largely untouched.

In February 1960, four Black college students sat down at a segregated Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, and asked to be served. They refused to leave their seats after being denied service. Within days, more than 50 students had volunteered to continue the sit-in, and within weeks the movement had spread to other college campuses.

Sit-ins and other protests swept across the South in early 1960, touching more than 65 cities in 12 states. Roughly 50,000 young people joined the protests that year.

The Election of 1960

By the 1960 presidential campaign, civil rights had emerged as a crucial issue. Just a few weeks before the election, Martin Luther King Jr. was arrested while leading a protest in Atlanta, Georgia. John Kennedy phoned his wife, Coretta Scott King to express his concern, while a call from Robert Kennedy to the judge helped secure her husband's safe release. The Kennedys' personal intervention led to a public endorsement by Martin Luther King Sr., the influential father of the civil rights leader. The publicizing of this endorsement, combined with other campaign efforts, contributed to increased support among Black voters for Kennedy.

Across the nation, almost 70 percent of African Americans voted for Kennedy, and these votes provided the winning edge in several key states. When President Kennedy took office in January 1961, African Americans had high expectations for the new administration.

But Kennedy's narrow election victory and small working margin in Congress contributed to his cautious navigation of civil rights issues. He was reluctant to lose southern support for legislation on many fronts by pushing too hard on civil rights legislation. Instead, encouraged by staff, he appointed unprecedented numbers of African Americans to high-level positions in the administration and strengthened the Civil Rights Commission. He spoke out in favor of school desegregation, praised a number of cities for integrating their schools, and put Vice President Lyndon Johnson in charge of the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity. Attorney General Robert Kennedy turned his attention to voting rights, initiating five times the number of suits brought during the previous administration.

The Freedom Rides

President Kennedy may have been reluctant to push ahead with civil rights legislation, but millions of African Americans forged ahead. Eventually, the administration was compelled to act.

For decades, seating on buses in the South had been segregated, along with bus station waiting rooms, rest rooms, and restaurants. In May 1961, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), led by James Farmer, organized integrated Freedom Rides to defy segregation in interstate transportation. Freedom Riders were arrested in North Carolina and beaten in South Carolina. In Alabama, a bus was burned, and the riders attacked with baseball bats and tire irons. Attorney General Robert Kennedy sent 400 federal marshals to protect the Freedom Riders and urged the Interstate Commerce Commission to order the desegregation of interstate travel.

James Meredith and the Integration of Ole Miss

In 1962, James H. Meredith Jr., an African American Air Force veteran, applied for admission to the all-white University of Mississippi, known as "Ole Miss." He attempted to register four times without success.

Long telephone conversations between the president, the attorney general, and Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett failed to produce a solution. When federal marshals accompanied Meredith to campus in another attempt to register for classes, rioting erupted by white protesters. Two people died and dozens were injured. President Kennedy mobilized the National Guard and sent federal troops to the campus. Meredith registered the next day and attended his first class. This was the first step in ending segregation at the University of Mississippi.

Martin Luther King Jr., Bull Connor, and the Demonstrations in Birmingham

In the spring of 1963, Martin Luther King Jr., and Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth launched a campaign of mass protests in Birmingham, Alabama, which King called the most segregated city in America. Initially, the demonstrations had little impact. Then, on Good Friday, King was arrested and spent a week behind bars, where he wrote one of his most famous meditations on racial injustice and civil disobedience, "Letter from Birmingham Jail." Meanwhile, James Bevel, another organizer of the Birmingham Campaign, rallied Black youths to march in the streets at the beginning of May. Birmingham City Commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor used police dogs and high-pressure fire hoses to put down the peaceful demonstrations. Nearly a thousand young people were arrested. The violence was broadcast on television to the nation and the world.

Invoking federal authority, President Kennedy sent several thousand troops to an Alabama air base, and his administration responded by speeding up the drafting of a comprehensive civil rights bill.

Integrating the University of Alabama

Governor George Wallace had vowed at his inauguration to defend "segregation now, segregation tomorrow, and segregation forever." In June 1963, he upheld his promise to "stand in the schoolhouse door" to prevent two Black students from enrolling at the University of Alabama. To protect the students and secure their admission, President Kennedy federalized the Alabama National Guard. And on the evening of June 11, the president addressed the nation.

Kennedy defined the civil rights crisis as moral, as well as constitutional and legal. He announced that major civil rights legislation would be submitted to the Congress to guarantee equal access to public facilities, to end segregation in education, and to provide federal protection of the right to vote. A few hours later, Medgar Evers, the best-known civil rights activist in Mississippi and a field officer in the NAACP, was murdered outside his home.

The March on Washington

On August 28, 1963, an interracial and interfaith crowd of more than 250,000 Americans demonstrated for social and economic justice in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Key civil rights figures led the march including A. Philip Randolph, Roy Wilkins, Bayard Rustin, Whitney Young, and John Lewis. The most memorable moment came when Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. President Kennedy, concerned about the potential impact of the March on his pending civil rights legislation, initially did not support the event. But, after the successful conclusion of the March, he invited civil rights leaders to the White House where they discussed the need for bi-partisan support of civil rights legislation.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964

During the summer and fall of 1963, the Kennedy administration worked to build bi-partisan support for the legislation. In late fall, the comprehensive civil rights bill cleared several hurdles in Congress and won the endorsement of House and Senate Republican leaders. It was not passed, however, before November 22, 1963, when President Kennedy was assassinated. The bill was left in the hands of Lyndon B. Johnson. Before becoming vice president, Johnson had served more than two decades in Congress as a congressman and senator from Texas. He used his substantial political acumen, the assistance of Robert Kennedy's Justice Department, and the outpouring of emotion after President Kennedy's assassination to generate passage of the Civil Rights Act.

Provisions of the legislation included: (1) protecting African Americans against discrimination in voter qualification tests; (2) outlawing discrimination in hotels, motels, restaurants, theaters, and all other public accommodations engaged in interstate commerce; (3) authorizing the US Attorney General's Office to file legal suits to enforce desegregation in public schools; (4) authorizing the withdrawal of federal funds from programs practicing discrimination; and (5) outlawing discrimination in employment in any business exceeding 25 people and creating an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to review complaints.

Passed on July 2, 1964, the Civil Rights Act was a crucial step in achieving the civil rights movement's initial goal: full legal equality. Another milestone -- the Voting Rights Act -- was passed in 1965. But more work has remained to be done. Although passage of these laws were significant achievements in the 1960s, discriminatory practices in many areas continue as civil rights activists strive for equality in the 21st century.

