Unit 3: Containment and brinkmanship: The Cuban Missile Crisis

The Cuban crisis was another crucial event in the Cold War. It is also an example of containment, but of containment that was preceded by dangerous brinkmanship.

On 1 January 1959 Fidel Castro and his supporters overthrew the Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista, and took control of the state of Cuba. Cuba is an island that is only about 150 km off the east coast of the United States. It had, for many years, been dominated politically and economically by the US, and was a favourite holiday resort for Americans. When the new Cuban government began seizing and taking control of land and other assets (many of which were foreign-owned), the US formally ended its diplomatic relations with Cuba and imposed an economic embargo on the island.

In April 1961 the US government backed and assisted an invasion of Cuba by anti-Castro Cubans at the Bay of Pigs in the south of the country. However, this force was decisively defeated by Cuban government troops within a few days. The Cuban government now turned to the Soviet Union for greater support and clearly began moving towards becoming a communist state, for example by nationalising more assets. Cuba thus became a ‘hot spot’ in the Cold War.

In late 1962 the Soviet Union decided to set up bases with nuclear missiles [rocket-propelled bombs] on Cuba and shipped the required materials to the island during September and October. By mid-October, American spyplanes had detected the nuclear bases and missiles on Cuba and informed the American government. If the bases came into operation, many American cities would be within range of nuclear attack from Cuba.

After carefully considering a number of alternatives with a group of close advisers, President Kennedy decided to use American ships to set up a blockade of Cuba, which the USA called a ‘quarantine’. The idea was to stop any Soviet ships carrying materials for the nuclear sites in Cuba from reaching the island. The quarantine came into effect at 16.00 a.m. (Washington time) on 24 October 1962. The whole world now stood on the brink of a terribly destructive nuclear war between the two superpowers.

At 10.25 a.m., two Soviet ships heading for Cuba were reported to have stopped before reaching the American quarantine line. By 10.30, six ships had either stopped or turned back. (P.M.H. Bell, The World since 1945: An international history, Bloomsbury Academic, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing, 2001, pp.143–144) The Soviet Union government, under its leader Nikita Khrushchev, had decided to avoid a confrontation with the Americans that could have ended in nuclear war between the two superpowers, with disastrous results for the entire planet.

After several days of tense negotiation behind the scenes, the American and Soviet governments struck a deal. The terms of the agreement were the following:

* The Soviet Union would remove its nuclear missiles from Cuba.
* The US would not invade Cuba and would lift the quarantine.
* The US would remove its missile sites from Turkey in secret. (The US did not want to lose face by having this fact talked about.)

President Kennedy addresses the American people regarding the discovery of Soviet nuclear-missile bases on Cuba, 22 October 1962.

Key words

brinkmanship – taking a situation to the limits of safety in order to win an advantage
assets – useful property of various kinds
economic embargo – a refusal to trade
blockade – ways of physically preventing vessels from entering or leaving the ports of a country
quarantine – a period of enforced isolation (especially to prevent the spread of a disease)
For a number of days, the world had stood on the brink of an all-out nuclear war between the two superpowers. Fortunately, this did not happen as both sides were terrified of the consequences of a nuclear war. This is what Churchill had meant by ‘the balance of terror’.

A surprising result of the Cuban Missile Crisis, as it came to be known, was that relations between the superpowers actually improved. Both sides desperately wanted to avoid the possibility of a nuclear war between them. To help avoid this, the following were put in place:

- A ‘hot-line’ (first via telegraph, then via telephone) was set up between Washington and Moscow to allow direct, secure and almost immediate communication between the two governments in the event of a crisis.
- Both superpowers, together with Britain, began to move towards a treaty banning the testing of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water. This led to the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty of 1963.

Commenting on the new stability in the relationship between the US and the Soviet Union at this time, the historian John Lewis Gaddis puts it thus:

'It [the Cuban Missile Crisis] persuaded everyone who was involved in it ... that the weapons each side had developed during the Cold War posed a greater threat to both sides than the United States and the Soviet Union did to one another. This improbable series of events, universally regarded now as the closest the world came, during the second half of the 20th century, to a third world war, provided a glimpse of a future no one wanted: of a conflict projected beyond restraint [self-control], reason, and the likelihood of survival.'


The situation represented by the Cuban Missile Crisis has also been called MAD (mutually assured destruction). The idea behind MAD is that a nuclear war between two superpowers would result in the total destruction of both. This would mean, in effect, that neither side could afford to start a nuclear war. This is precisely what Churchill had meant by his phrase, ‘the balance of terror’.

On the other hand, the Cuban Missile Crisis had negative results: to try to make themselves secure from attack, the superpowers now intensified their arms race in terms of the balance-of-terror principle.

Because he successfully and visibly defied Soviet power, Kennedy gained much prestige from the Cuban Missile Crisis. Khrushchev, however, lost prestige within the Soviet Union for having clearly lost the battle for supremacy with the US. He eventually lost his position as leader of the Soviet Union in 1964, for this and other reasons. However, Khrushchev’s actions during the Cuban Missile Crisis had gone a long way towards avoiding the outbreak of nuclear war between the superpowers.

Premier Khrushchev announces the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Cuba, ending the Cuban Missile Crisis (30 October 1962).
The Cuban Missile Crisis could be seen as part of the American policy of containment of Soviet power. It was also a clear example of brinkmanship on both sides, with the two superpowers taking the world to the very edge of nuclear war, then drawing back from disaster at the last moment.

I have directed that the following initial steps be taken immediately: First, to halt this offensive build-up, a strict quarantine on all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba is being initiated. All ships of any kind bound for Cuba from whatever nation or port will, if found to contain cargoes of offensive weapons, be turned back.

Source N: President Kennedy's decision to blockade Cuba, 22 October 1962

You are disturbed over Cuba. You say that this disturbs you because it is 90 miles by sea from the coast of the United States of America. But Turkey adjoins us; our sentries patrol back and forth and see each other. Do you consider, then, that you have the right to demand security for your own country and the removal of the weapons you call offensive, but do not accord the same right to us? You have placed destructive missile weapons, which you call offensive, in Turkey, literally next to us. How then can recognition of our equal military capacities be reconciled with such unequal relations between our great states? This is irreconcilable.

Therefore I make this proposal: We are willing to remove from Cuba the means which you regard as offensive. We are willing to carry this out and to make this pledge in the United Nations. Your representatives will make a declaration to the effect that the United States, for its part, considering the uneasiness and anxiety of the Soviet State, will remove its analogous means from Turkey.

Source O: Khrushchev's proposal to Kennedy 26 October 1962

1. You would agree to remove these weapons systems from Cuba under appropriate United Nations observation and supervision; and undertake, with suitable safeguards, to halt the further introduction of such weapons systems into Cuba.

2. We, on our part, would agree — upon the establishment of adequate arrangements through the United Nations to ensure the carrying out and continuation of these commitments —
   a) to remove promptly the quarantine measures now in effect and
   b) to give assurances against an invasion of Cuba.

I am confident that other nations of the Western Hemisphere would be prepared to do likewise.

Source P: President Kennedy's proposal to the Soviet Union 27 October 1962
The cartoon above shows that the Cold War was a time of ongoing conflict and rivalry between the Soviet Union (represented by Khrushchev on the left) and the United States (in the form of Kennedy on the right). If things went wrong during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the stakes would be very high, as shown by the nuclear bombs both men can set off at any time merely by pressing a button. Reproduced with permission by Solo Syndication.

**Activity 4: Using a variety of sources to understand different reactions to an international crisis situation**

1. Study Sources M and N. Explain what decision President Kennedy made and why he took this decision. (3 x 2) (6)
2. Read Source O. Do you think that Khrushchev's proposal was reasonable? Explain your answer. (3 x 2) (6)
3. Read Source P. Which matter does Kennedy choose to ignore in this response, and why? (2 x 2) (4)
4. Using the text, describe the agreement finally reached between the US and the Soviet Union. (4 x 2) (8)
5. Study Source Q. Explain in detail why this cartoon is an appropriate representation of the situation at the time. (3 x 2) (6)
6. Read the information in this unit and write a paragraph in which you describe the results of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Your paragraph will be assessed with the rubric on page 393. (10)

Play to ui
Unit 4: Who was to blame for the Cold War?

It is not particularly useful to blame one side or the other for the Cold War. It has been almost natural throughout history for different countries or political units to find themselves in conflict with one another. Their interests are different, and they will do whatever they need to do in order to further their own interests and damage those of their opponents. Furthermore, as indicated in Unit 1, the two superpowers had differing ideologies and confronted each other physically in Europe.

In the case of the Cold War, the tendency for powers to be in conflict with one another was made more intense by:
- the fears resulting from the recent experiences during World War II of the USA and the Soviet Union
- the hugeness and strength of the main rivals (they were ‘superpowers’)
- the immense destructive power both had achieved through their possession of nuclear arms.

Fortunately, this conflict stopped short of open warfare, precisely because both were fully aware of how terribly destructive their nuclear weaponry was. It did not make sense to go into a war where both sides would be effectively destroyed. (See Unit 3 on page 17.)

Another aspect that made the conflict worse was proximity: the fact that the US and the Soviet Union confronted each other directly in Europe and, more immediately, at the line of the Iron Curtain in Berlin. This meant that any spark could result in direct and open conflict. Ironically, this situation and the ‘balance of terror’ discussed above made such conflict between the two sides less likely.

Each side, however, blamed the other.

The United States blamed the Soviet Union for:
- insisting on setting up communist regimes in Eastern Europe
- refusing to withdraw from East Germany
- its aggressive attempts to spread communism in the rest of Europe and throughout the world.

The Soviet Union, on the other hand, blamed the US for:
- refusing to withdraw from Europe
- following ‘imperialistic’ policies in Europe (the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan) and in the Third World
- setting up threatening nuclear bases in Italy and Turkey, which were directed at the USSR.

Playing the ‘blame game’, though, does not help historians and other students of the past to understand the Cold War any better.

Activity 5: Writing an essay to express your views on the reasons for a complex historical situation

Write an essay in which you present your view on which side (the US or the Soviet Union) was more responsible for the Cold War. You do not have to agree with the views presented in Unit 4 above, but you must give good reasons for your opinion.

For help with essay-writing skills, see the Skills Focus on page 40.

Your essay will be assessed with the rubric on page 392.
Unit 4: Civil Rights Movement

During the 1960s, there was a range of movements around the world which aimed to achieve the human rights and equality of all people and groups of people. These are known as civil rights movements. The most famous of these was the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) in the United States, which aimed to achieve equal rights for people of colour in the US, especially African-Americans. This movement will be studied in detail in Chapter 10. Linked to the CRM was the movement to achieve equal rights for women, for gays and lesbians.

The CRM also included attempts to improve conditions and achieve equality for Native Americans (Indians) and Mexican-Americans (also known as Chicanos). In Canada, some of the people of Quebec fought for recognition of the rights of French-speakers. In Australia and New Zealand, there were movements to achieve better treatment and equality for the aboriginal peoples.

A very prominent and well-publicised case was that of Catholics in Protestant-dominated Northern Ireland, which is part of Britain and not of the independent Irish Republic. Catholics are outnumbered roughly two-to-one in Northern Ireland. Catholics were in an inferior position and had to fight for equal access to public housing and the municipal (local council) vote. This led to significant outbreaks of violence from 1969, between the Irish Republican Army (IRA) on the one hand, and the Northern Ireland police and British troops on the other.

We have an autocracy [dictatorship] which runs this university.

And that brings me to the second mode of civil disobedience. There's a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious [hateful], makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part! You can't even tacitly [silently] take part! And you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus - and you've got to make it stop! And you've got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people who own it - that unless you're free the machine will be prevented from working at all!

That doesn't mean ... that you have to break anything. One thousand people sitting down some place, not letting anybody by, not letting anything happen, can stop any machine, including this machine! And it will stop!

... we'll do something which hasn't occurred at this University in a good long time! We're going to have real classes up there! They're going to be freedom schools conducted up there! We're going to have classes on the 1st and 14th amendments! We're going to spend our time learning about the things this University is afraid that we know! We're going to learn about freedom up there, and we're going to learn by doing!

Extract from http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mariosaviosprouhallsitin.htm

Source: Mario Savio speaks to fellow students before a sit-in at Berkeley campus, University of California, 2 December 1964
Woodstock
by Edgar Brau

I
Look: it happened here. A sense of surfeit grew from the unfeeling past-
Paternal Moneymen, whose alphabet
lay buried in the mud rosettas
where pigs leave their traces;
the torch-eyed eagle
passing crooked judgment
in careless corners of history;
the bomb's early light;
the day leaning more and more,
by imperial equation, on the blind man's stick,
enforcer of night's might.

It happened here. Here burst forth
a new sense of honor,
shaky still in its will to say no:
no to the syntax of infamy
reaping colonial crops;
no to the army's gunpowder garb
waiting for infants to shed their skin;
no to the bombers, no to the phosphorus
etching hell's alliterations
on scaly green jungle tops;
no to the urban blight that darkens
flower and infinity.

Here the spirit contrived to join
longing with longing, sphere with sphere;
the soul mindful of the moment
found here a different summer and a different light
- a purer air for loving suns
achieved by the flapping of nestlings' wings.
The unruly track of this meadow
became a shortcut for the willful,
who basked in the surety of a miracle
waiting in the shadows of that first step.
And suddenly weathervanes stopped their dancing,
as a name was torn from the map: Woodstock.

II
Woodstock... Over your half-open name
rumors of life raised a curtain
where linger, limned by childhood memories,
the legacies of ancient ties
binding our tribe to the garden primeval.
Songs, for example, and music,
God's coffers for a rainy day.
And peace, that border-to-border salute,
a promise of flowers.
And love, the eye-to-eye power
in which cycles throb
in their rush to be loosed.

Here, while all around the wind imprinted trees
with its kindest instinct,
the vertigo of turns on which futures build frontiers
came with that erupting trig:
Here, in every corner, chanting volunteers
piled up the ashes of progress;
from here, a purple haze raised circus cones
over the slumbering vastness of cities
that had previously been too well-etched:
and there the machinal brew was replaced
by acrobatic plays
from dreams of the Dream.

And freedom, that is, the noisy promise of its name,
exploded from a secret age, as when
the gods were naming. And the flute, little sister
bending with the motion of wooden ships,
of ubiquitous lovers who embraced by the lake
and affirmed a new future
of little ones destined to love.
Proliferating like flowers reaped by the winds,
the metamorphosis emptied its cauldron here.
And with the broken slither of lightning,
every pure thought so conceived laid
its power in the anxious hand of time unfolding.

http://wordswithoutborders.org/article/woodstock
poem published by Words without borders
Activity 3: Using a range of sources to determine the nature of the counter-culture of the 1960s and the nature of the Woodstock Rock Festival of August 1969

1. Read Source I.
1.1 What is Savio's attitude to authority as revealed in the first two paragraphs of the extract? (3 x 2) (6)
1.2 What does Savio mean by the 'machine' in the third paragraph? (2 x 2) (4)
1.3 What are Savio's ideas of education, judging by the last paragraph? (3 x 2) (6)
1.4 Did Savio believe in violent demonstrations against authority? Support your answer by quoting from his speech. (3 x 2) (6)

2. Read Source J.
2.1 Write a paragraph in which you describe Edgar Brau's view of Woodstock, referring to the words of the poem in the process. Your paragraph will be assessed with the rubric on page 393. (10)
Chapter 10: Case study: the US Civil Rights Movement

Unit 1: Reasons and origins of the Civil Rights Movement in the USA

1.1 Reasons for the CRM (Civil Rights Movement)

After the American Civil War (1861–1865), segregation [separation between white and black or 'coloured' Americans] became the effective policy of the US, especially in the Southern states, which had been defeated in the war. This policy was legalised by the 'Jim Crow' laws, which discriminated against black Americans by insisting that they use separate facilities and services and live separately from whites. The right of the states to insist on separate public facilities was upheld by the Supreme Court in the Plessy vs Ferguson judgment of 1896. This principle was expressed as 'separate but equal'. Separate facilities included housing, schools, public transport, public toilets, restaurants, and drinking fountains. Inevitably, separate facilities came to mean inferior ones for black people.

Black Americans were denied certain of their civil rights, especially in the Southern states. For example, they were disenfranchised [lost their votes] and were exploited economically (given only heavy manual labour or unskilled work; denied equal employment opportunities; poor pay and working conditions). They were also sometimes violently attacked by groups like the racist, fiercely segregationist Ku Klux Klan (KKK). Many lynchings [illegal killings] occurred. However, there was a decline in documented lynchings from fifty-nine in 1921 to six or fewer per year in the early 1940s. (From M. Gardner, Harry Truman and Civil Rights: Moral Courage and Political Risks, Southern Illinois University Press, 2003, p 49.)

In 1909, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP, pronounced N, double A, C, P) was founded to promote black equality. It used peaceful methods like legal challenges, education through speeches and writings, demonstrations, and lobbying [trying to influence] white politicians, but without much success.

World War II (1939–1945) had a major influence on the many thousands of black servicemen. They experienced a larger world where segregation was not the norm. Many of them performed specialist roles, some of them as officers. They came back to the US wanting to assert their rights and achieve equality for themselves, their families, and their children.
1.2 Origins of the CRM

In 1954, the US Supreme Court made a landmark decision in the case of Brown v. Board of Education. It struck down the Plessy v. Ferguson ruling of 1896, declaring that separate but equal public services was unconstitutional. In practice, separate did not mean equal. This decision meant, for example, that separate schools could no longer be maintained. This crucial court ruling marked a new, intensified phase in the Civil Rights Movement, as whites resisted its implementation.

In 1955, another event further stimulated the movement. A fourteen-year-old black boy from Chicago, Emmett Till, was brutally murdered by two white men for supposedly ‘making a pass’ at [showing attraction towards] a white woman. The two men were put on trial but were acquitted by an all-white jury. (In 1956, they admitted to a journalist that they had indeed committed the murder. According to American law, one cannot be tried twice for the same offence.) Emmett Till was buried in his hometown, Chicago. His mother insisted that his casket be left open so that everyone could see the terrible damage that had been done to him. People around the country and the world were horrified by the racist murder of Emmett Till and the brutality of his killing. Some see the Emmett Till case as being the event that sparked off the activist Civil Rights Movement in the US.

The object [aim] of the [14th] Amendment [to the Constitution of the United States] was undoubtedly to enforce the absolute equality of the two races before the law, but in the nature of things, it could not have been intended to abolish [do away with] distinctions based upon colour, or to enforce social, as distinguished [distinct] from political equality, or commingling [mixing] of the two races upon terms unsatisfactory to either. Laws permitting, and even requiring their separation, in places where they are liable to be brought into contact, do not necessarily imply the inferiority of either race to the other, and have been generally, if not universally, recognised as within the competency [responsibilities] of the state legislatures [lawmaking bodies] in the exercise of their police power. [In other words, separation of the races does not necessarily mean that one race is regarded as inferior to another.] ... If one race be inferior to the other civilly or politically, the Constitution of the United States cannot put them on the same plane [level].


Source A: Judgment in the case of ‘Plessy vs Ferguson’, 1896. Plessy, a black man, was charged with sitting in an all-white railroad car. The judgment above implies that the policy of ‘separate but equal’ was constitutionally valid and racial segregation was therefore legal.

Did you know?

A documentary film was issued by PBS in 2003 called ‘The Murder of Emmett Till’. It is available on DVD. A warning: it does contain graphic images. The famous folk singer, Bob Dylan, recorded a song called ‘The Ballad (or Death) of Emmett Till’ in 1963. It is well worth listening to.

Source B: Segregation sign from a restaurant in Dallas, Texas. The sign reads: ‘No Dogs. Negroes, Mexicans’
Segregation of white and Negro children in the public schools of a State solely on the basis of race, pursuant to [in agreement with] state laws permitting or requiring such segregation, denies to Negro children the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment [to the Constitution] — even though the physical facilities and other ‘tangible’ [real, capable of being touched or felt] factors of white and Negro schools may be equal.

(a) The question presented in these cases must be determined not on the basis of conditions existing when the Fourteenth Amendment was adopted, but in the light of the full development of public education and its present place in American life throughout the Nation.

(b) Where a State has undertaken to provide an opportunity for an education in its public schools, such an opportunity is a right, which must be made available to all on equal terms.

(c) Segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race deprives children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities, even though the physical facilities and other ‘tangible’ factors may be equal.

(d) The ‘separate but equal’ doctrine [principle] adopted in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537, has no place in the field of public education.


**Source E:** Judgment in the case of *Brown vs the Board of Education*, 1954. This landmark case overturned the precedent set in the *Plessy vs Ferguson* case (see Source A) by declaring that racial segregation in state schools was unconstitutional.
**Activity 1: Use a range of sources to determine the nature of segregation in the US**

1. Read Source A carefully. Use a dictionary if necessary.
   1.1 What does the first sentence mean to you?
   1.2 What does the second sentence mean to you?
   1.3 What does the final sentence state, in your own words?
2. Study Source B carefully. Why would this sign be deeply offensive to African- (and Mexican-) Americans?
3. Study Source C carefully. Why would this sign be offensive to African-Americans?
4. Study Source D carefully. Why would this sign be deeply offensive to African-Americans?
5. Read Source E carefully. Use a dictionary if necessary.
   5.1 Explain carefully what the first sentence means.
   5.2 What does paragraph (b) state, in your own words?
   5.3 Explain the 'separate but equal' principle.
   5.4 What is the finding in this case on the 'separate but equal' principle?
6. Study Source F carefully.
   6.1 What does the door represent?
   6.2 What do the small children represent?
   6.3 Carefully explain the message of this cartoon.

**Source F:** A cartoon, 'Inch by Inch', commenting on school segregation in the US. Cartoon by Bill Mauldin, 1 December 1960 (Courtesy of Library of Congress)
Junior, and the influence of passive resistance (Gandhi) on Martin Luther King

2.1 The role, impact, and influence of Martin Luther King Junior

Martin Luther King Jr was born on 15 January 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia. His father was the minister at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. Martin decided to follow his father into the ministry and studied at Morehouse College, Atlanta, and Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania, later obtaining a doctorate from Boston University. King became a pastor at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama in 1954.

When the Montgomery bus boycott started in December 1955 (see 3.1 on page 185), King was asked to be the spokesman for the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA). This was to be a historic decision. In his first speech to a mass meeting of the MIA, King electrified his audience with his eloquence. The next month, King was arrested and his home was attacked with a stick of dynamite, damaging the porch and shattering the living-room windows. An angry, armed black crowd gathered, confronting white policemen. King responded in these words:

"Now let's not get panickey. If you have weapons, take them home; if you do not have them, please do not seek to get them ... We cannot solve this problem through retaliatory [striking back] violence. We must meet violence with non-violence."


Through actions like these, King soon became, not only the leader of the bus boycott in Montgomery, but also a symbol of resistance to segregation and injustice against African-Americans throughout the country. He had displayed great courage, determination, calm, and had a most eloquent and inspiring way with words. He became a constant inspiration to others to maintain their resistance to segregation and unfair discrimination.

In February 1957, a body called the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was set up, with King as its leader. Its mission was to lead non-violent direct action against segregation and achieve full civil rights for black Americans. King led the SCLC for eleven years until his assassination in 1968.

2.2 The influence of passive resistance (Gandhi) on Martin Luther King

Martin Luther King realised early that violence was not the way for black people in the US to achieve their civil rights. For one thing, they were in a small minority (about 11% of the population at the time), it would be suicidal for them to take up arms against the vast white majority of the population. King adopted a philosophy of non-violence. He would not carry arms, nor would he allow his drivers and bodyguards to do so.
While at university, King had studied the writings of the American philosopher, Reinhold Niebuhr. Niebuhr argued that force was needed to defeat injustice. However, he believed that even passive resistance and civil disobedience involved the use of a kind of force. King reached the conclusion that Niebuhr’s thinking was too negative. As a Christian minister, he believed in the power of love to transform society for the better. In 1959, King visited Gandhi’s birthplace in India. Before leaving India, he said in a speech on radio:

Since being in India, I am more convinced than ever before that the method of non-violent resistance is the most potent weapon available to oppressed people in their struggle for justice and human dignity. In a real sense, Mahatma Gandhi embodied in his life certain universal principles that are inherent [inbuilt] in the moral structure of the universe, and these principles are as inescapable as the law of gravitation.


Like Gandhi, King became a firm believer in the power of mass non-violent direct action that is, passive resistance and civil disobedience. He believed that, if black people were prepared to suffer because of their protests and not strike back, they would eventually get their oppressors to see the error of their ways and change. In this way, reconciliation would be achieved through the power of love. This also meant that the oppressors would have no excuse to become violent themselves. King believed in reconciliation with white people and ultimate integration with them in a common society.

Mass non-violent direct action also helped to promote black unity and confidence. It attracted much publicity for the cause and built up considerable pressure on the federal courts to respond to the legal issues raised by the protests. By adopting the Gandhian strategy of non-violent direct action, King was able to bring about significant political and social change in the US.

After the successful beginning of the boycott on Monday, December 5, 1955, the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) came into being that afternoon, and Martin Luther King, Jr. accepted the presidency. As MIA leader, King became the focus of white hatred. On January 30, 1956, the King home was bombed. King had been speaking at a mass meeting at the First Baptist Church. When he heard the news, he told the crowd what had happened, and left the church.

Nearing his house, King saw blacks brandishing guns and knives, and a barricade of white policemen. King went inside and pushed through the crowd in his house to the back room to make sure Coretta and his ten-week-old baby were all right. Back in the front room of the house, some white reporters were trying to leave to file their stories, but could not get out of the house, which was surrounded by armed, angry blacks.

Taylor Branch, in Parting the Waters, tells what happened next:

King walked out onto the front porch. Holding up his hand for silence, he tried to still the anger by speaking with an exaggerated peacefulness in his voice. Everything was all right, he said. ‘Don’t get panicky. Don’t do anything panicky. Don’t get your weapons. If you have weapons, take them home. He who lives by the sword will perish [die] by the sword. Remember that is what Jesus said. We are not advocating violence. We want to love our enemies. I want you to love our enemies. Be good to them. This is what we must live by; We must meet hate with love.’

http://happlyinbooks.wordpress.com/2009/01/30/january-30-1956-%E2%80%93-martin-luther-king-jr%E2%80%99s-home-was-bombed/

Source G: Martin Luther King’s reaction to an attack on his home

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We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvellous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. They have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone...

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.'

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood...

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists... little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers...

From every mountaintop, let freedom ring.

http://www.usconstitution.net/dream.html. Copyright © Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr 1963 © Coretta Scott King 1991. Reprinted by arrangement with the Heirs to the Estate of Martin Luther King, Jr., c/o Writers House as agent for the proprietor New York, NY

Source H: Extract from the 'I have a dream' speech by Martin Luther King, 28 August 1963. This important speech outlined a vision for racial equality in America.
During the Civil Rights era in the United States, there were various forms of resistance and different ways that people participated in the Civil Rights Movement. While there were a range of more direct forms of political resistance, artists contributed to the struggle for racial equality in important ways. Music became one avenue of uniting people for a common cause and giving a voice to the movement. Folk singers such as Bob Dylan and Joan Baez are famous examples of musicians who were able to influence political events in the Civil Rights era through their songs. They performed their music, along with other significant musicians, at events such as the 1963 March on Washington, where their songs and the messages contained in them inspired people to continue fighting for justice.

Source K: A view on the influence of music during the Civil Rights era in America

Activity 2: Use extracts from Martin Luther King’s speeches and a civil rights song to establish the nature of the Civil Rights Movement

1. Read Source G.
   1.1 Read the last two paragraphs again and consult the text of 2.2 above. Explain how this source reflects Martin Luther King’s thinking on passive resistance as described in 2.2 above? (3 x 2) (5)
   1.2 Which qualities of character in Martin Luther King are suggested by this source? (3 x 2) (5)

2. Read Source H.
   2.1 Read the first two paragraphs again and consult the text of 2.2 above. Explain how this source reflects Martin Luther King’s thinking on passive resistance as described in 2.2 above? (3 x 2) (5)
   2.2 Read the extracts from ‘I have a dream’. Which ideas of the Civil Rights Movement are clearly expressed in this section of the speech? (3 x 2) (5)
   2.3 Referring to Sources H and I, write a paragraph suggesting how Martin Luther King was able to exercise such a powerful effect upon crowds of supporters. Your paragraph will be assessed with the rubric on page 393. (10)

3. Read Source K.
   3.1 Name four forms of resistance that people could have implemented during the Civil Rights movement. (1 x 4) (4)
   3.2 Compare the influence of music as a medium of protest to other forms of resistance that you have mentioned in your answer to 3.1. (2 x 2) (4)
   3.3 How did performances at pivotal events such as the 1963 March on Washington and Woodstock in 1969 have powerful impacts on political affairs? (2 x 2) (4)
   3.4 Explain the influence of songs like those performed by Dylan and Baez on the Civil Rights Movement. (2 x 2) (4)

4. Both Gandhi and Martin Luther King were killed by assassins. Explain what the cartoonist means by the words spoken by Gandhi in Source J. (5)

[55]
Unit 3: Forms of protest through civil disobedience. Montgomery bus boycott, sit-ins, marches including to Lincoln Memorial, Birmingham campaign, and Selma-Montgomery marches


Many Southern cities, public transport was segregated. Whites sat in front and blacks at the back. If the bus was full and a white person needed a seat, black people occupying the idle seats had to stand for the white person. (Whites and blacks were not allowed to sit next to each other in the same row.)

On 1 December 1955, Rosa Parks, a black seamstress who also worked for the local NAACP, refused to give up her seat for a white man. She was arrested and charged. A one-day bus boycott was decided upon by the local black community for 5 December. When it was successful, it was decided to continue the boycott.

The Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), led by Martin Luther King Jr, organised the boycott. About a hundred leaders, including King, were charged in terms of an old anti-boycott law, but this merely united the black people behind them. King ended up being plunged across the abyss of humiliation in jail. When he addressed the first mass meeting of MIA, King said:

'We are here because, first and foremost, we are American citizens, and we are determined to acquire our citizenship to the fullness of its meaning. We are here also because of our deep-seated belief that democracy transformed from thin paper to thick action is the greatest form of government on earth. He continued that there came a time when people got tired, 'tired of being trampled over by the iron feet of oppression ... tired of being plunged across the abyss of humiliation'.

But, he insisted, the struggle would be carried on in a spirit of non-violence, love, and justice. The audience responded to his eloquence enthusiastically.

Quoted in: A. Fairclough, Makers of the Twentieth Century: Martin Luther King, London: Sphere Books, 1990, pp.19–20 Reproduced with permission by Adam Fairclough

The bus boycott continued for eleven months in all, with people either walking to work or using carpools, which the MIA organised. Sometimes white women would give lifts to black women. Of course, very often they needed these women as domestic workers and child-minders.

In June 1956, an Alabama federal district court ruled that bus segregation was unconstitutional and therefore illegal. The bus boycott continued with enthusiasm.

In November 1956, the US Supreme Court upheld the decision of the Alabama district court. The boycotters had won. A new city ordinance allowed black people to sit where they pleased on the buses. The boycott officially ended on 20 December 1955, after 381 days. The success of the Birmingham bus boycott stimulated the national Civil Rights Movement across the US and launched Martin Luther King as one of its national leaders.

Segregated public transport was the focus of another civil rights campaign, the Freedom Riders of 1961. Blacks and whites travelled on inter-state buses, ignoring the segregation practices along the way. The KKK attacked the Riders violently; the police provided little protection.

The police photograph of Rosa Parks after her arrest
or no protection. Despite all the violence and persecution, the Freedom Rides continued.

Finally, in September 1961, on the insistence of Attorney-General, Robert F. Kennedy, interstate travel was officially desegregated.

The KKK set fire to buses carrying Freedom Riders and tried to prevent people leaving the buses.

### 3.2 Sit-ins, 1960

In many Southern towns at this time, facilities, such as lunch counters in department stores, were segregated. Some young black people decided to protest against this arrangement.

In February 1960, the first sit-in occurred at the white lunch counter at Woolworth’s in Greensboro, North Carolina. At this store, blacks would be served takeaways, but were not allowed to sit and eat. On the day in question, four black students sat down at the counter and refused to move until they were served, which they were not. They stayed until closing time. The sit-in continued daily, with more students joining in, and soon spread to other stores and to other towns across the South.

The Nashville students were trained in non-violence and ignored insults and other provocative behaviour from disapproving whites. Eventually, after about two weeks of sit-ins, the demonstrators were attacked by some whites and arrested. They were sentenced to about a month in prison. Nevertheless, the sit-ins continued.

At Easter 1960, the civil rights activists in Nashville launched a boycott of white-owned downtown businesses. This action spread to many other cities and was very well supported by black people. After the house of a prominent black lawyer was bombed, about 4,000 black people marched through the town. Faced with this public pressure, the mayor, Ben West, came out publicly in support of the principle of desegregated facilities.
soon lunch counters in Nashville and many other Southern towns were desegregated. This particular sit-in movement had proved highly successful. Similar protests that occurred at segregated facilities were 'read-ins' at libraries, 'wade-ins' at public pools, 'play-ins' at parks, and 'kneel-ins' at churches.

Map of the American Deep South showing, from east to west, the states of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi; Tennessee in the north; and Louisiana, in the south.

3.3 The March on Washington (Lincoln Memorial), August 1963

Martin Luther King Jr and other CRM leaders felt that the time had come to pressure the federal government for change. They decided to organise a massive march on Washington, D.C., the nation's capital. On 28 August 1963, perhaps 250 000 (a quarter of a million) people, black and white, converged on Washington and marched from the Washington Monument to the Lincoln Memorial, to appeal for jobs, civil rights, and equality for all.

Famous folk singers, Bob Dylan and Joan Baez, among others, sang at the march, and Martin Luther King Jr delivered what became his most famous speech, 'I have a dream'.

(See Source H on page 183 for an extract.)

3.4 Birmingham Campaign, 1963

Birmingham, Alabama, was a fiercely racist and segregationist Southern city. Its commissioner for Public Safety, Eugene 'Bull' Connor, was fully prepared to use violence to uphold segregation in Birmingham, as the Freedom Riders had experienced in 1961.

See Unit 3.1 on page 185.)

Leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), including Martin Luther King Jr, decided to target Birmingham in a special civil disobedience campaign. The campaign aimed at local white businesses with sit-ins and marches to try to have utilities desegregated and improve job opportunities for blacks. Hundreds were arrested and jailed, including King. While in jail, he wrote what became known as his 'Letter from Birmingham Jail', in response to a letter to the press signed by eight respected local white ministers, criticising the demonstrations. He defended the civil disobedience campaign in these words:

Martin Luther King Jr being arrested. King went to jail 14 times and spent 39 days behind bars.
I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere ... For years now I have heard the word ‘Wait!’ It rings in the ears of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This ‘Wait’ has almost always meant ‘Never’. We must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists [Thurgood Marshall], that ‘justice too long delayed is justice denied.’

Reproduced with permission by Gerard DeGroot.

In May 1963, black schoolchildren were involved in the campaign, in what became known as the 'children's crusade'. Hundreds were arrested. Eventually, 'Bull' Connor lost his patience and turned police dogs and high-pressure water hoses on the demonstrators. The television and newspaper images of these events shocked the nation and the world. Street fighting broke out between blacks and whites, and a wave of bombings on black targets followed.

On 11 June 1963, President John F. Kennedy addressed the nation on television. He proposed that a new Civil Rights bill [proposed law] be put to Congress [the American parliament], aimed at ending segregation in Southern schools, discrimination in job opportunities, and black disenfranchisement.

The success of the Birmingham campaign succeeded in bringing black demonstrators out on the streets across the South. Some 50 cities introduced desegregation measures. The CRM had become a mass movement, led by Martin Luther King Jr.

3.5 Freedom Summer, 1964

The Freedom Summer of 1964 was a campaign mainly of Northern blacks and whites who travelled to the South to encourage blacks to register as voters. It focused on Mississippi, probably the most racist of the Southern states. A boycott of white-owned businesses in Jackson, the capital of Mississippi, was launched.

In June 1964, Freedom Summer was announced by CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) as a campaign of ‘Freedom Schools’ and voter registration. Community centres and alternative schools teaching black history were set up. On 21 June, three volunteers, two whites from the North and one black from Mississippi, disappeared. On 4 August, their bodies were discovered. They had been shot and the black man had also been severely beaten. They were buried separately because Mississippi laws required that blacks and whites be segregated even in cemeteries.

3.6 Selma-Montgomery marches

For several years, black people in Selma, Alabama, had tried unsuccessfully to register as voters. Sometimes they were prevented by force. In February 1965, a march took place in neighboring Marion. The participants were attacked by Alabama state troopers. A young man, Jimmy Lee Jackson, trying to protect his mother, was shot at point blank range and died eight days later.

The CRM leaders decided on a symbolic march in protest from Selma to Montgomery, the capital of Alabama, nearly 90 km away. Governor George C. Wallace banned the march by on Sunday 7 March 1965, about 600 marchers proceeded towards Montgomery. They were stopped on a bridge on the outskirts of Selma by state troopers who beat and tear-gassed them, and charged them down on horses. These scenes of violence were broadcast across the US and caused national shock and outrage.
Countrywide, hundreds of people came to show sympathy with the black people of Selma. A planned second march for Tuesday, 9 March was banned by a federal judge. More than 2000 people, including many prominent people, marched out to the same bridge where the attacks had occurred on the Sunday. When they confronted the state troopers, they knelt to pray and were then led back into Selma by Martin Luther King. That night, a white minister, James Reeb, one of the marchers, was attacked and clubbed by white segregationists. He died two days later. This caused a national outcry.

In July 1964, a Civil Rights Act was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. It made discrimination on the basis of racial, ethnic, national, religious and gender identity illegal.

On 15 March 1965, President Johnson announced to Congress his government's intention to introduce a comprehensive [wide-ranging] Voting Rights bill. In his speech, he quoted the most famous CRM song, therefore publicly identifying himself with its cause. He used the following words:

*What happened in Selma is part of a far larger movement which reaches into every section and state of America. It is the effort of American Negroes to secure for themselves the full blessings of American life. Their cause must be our cause, too, because it's not just Negroes but really it's all of us who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry [prejudice] and injustice. And we shall overcome.*

*Quoted at: http://www.historyplace.com/speeches/johnson.htm*

On 16 March 1965, a federal judge declared the proposed Selma-Montgomery march legal. It began on 21 March with thousands of people participating and finally reached Montgomery five days later with some 25,000 marchers in place, including the famous folk singer, Joan Baez, and Martin Luther King himself.

On 6 August 1965, the Voting Rights Act was signed by President Johnson, after being passed by the US Congress. It made illegal any discriminatory practices in the registration of voters, and provided for monitoring by the federal government to ensure that its terms were honoured. The result was that thousands of black voters across the South were able to register securely as voters.

Frequently Negroes paid their fare at the front door, and then were forced to get off and re-board at the rear. An even more humiliating practice was the custom of forcing Negroes to stand over empty seats reserved for 'whites only'. Even if the bus had no white passengers, and Negroes were packed throughout, they were prohibited from sitting in the front four seats (which held ten persons). But the practice went further. If white persons were already occupying all of their reserved seats and additional white people boarded the bus, Negroes sitting in the unreserved section immediately behind the whites were asked to stand so that the whites could be seated. If the Negroes refused to stand and move back, they were arrested.

*M.L. King Jr, Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story, Boston: Beacon Press, 1986*

Source L: How racial segregation worked on buses in Montgomery
As I got up on the bus and walked to the seat I saw there was only one vacancy that was just back of where it was considered the white section. So this was the seat that I took, next to the aisle, and a man was sitting next to me. Across the aisle there were two women, and there were a few seats at this point in the very front of the bus that was called the white section. ... And on the third stop there were some people getting on, and at this point all of the front seats were taken. ... The third stop is when all the front seats were taken, and this one man was standing and when the driver looked around and saw he was standing, he asked the four of us, the man in the seat with me and the two women across the aisle, to let him have those front seats.

At his first request, didn't any of us move. Then he spoke again and said, 'You'd better make it light on yourselves and let me have those seats.' ... When the three people, the man who was in the seat with me and the two women, stood up and moved into the aisle, I remained where I was. When the driver saw that I was still sitting there, he asked if I was going to stand up. I told him, no, I wasn't. He said, 'Well, if you don't stand up, I'm going to have you arrested.' I told him to go on and have me arrested.

He got off the bus and came back shortly. A few minutes later, two policemen got on the bus, and they approached me and asked if the driver had asked me to stand up, and I said yes, and they wanted to know why I didn't. I told them I didn't think I should have to stand up ... They placed me under arrest then and had me to get in the police car, and I was taken to jail.

*Rosa Parks, interviewed by Howell Raines for the book My Soul is Rested: Movement Days in the Deep South Remembered, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1977*

*Source M:* Rosa Parks describes her protest on 1 December 1955

*Source N:* Cartoon showing black reaction to the bus boycott. *Uh Uh — I'm not going your way!*


When I went to Montgomery, Alabama, as a pastor in 1954, I had not the slightest idea that I would later become involved in a crisis in which non-violent resistance would be applicable. After I had lived in the community for about a year, the boycott began. The Negro people of Montgomery, exhausted by the humiliating experiences that had constantly faced them on the buses, expressed in a massive act of non-cooperation their determination to be free. They came to see that it was more honourable to walk the streets in dignity than to ride the buses in humiliation. At the beginning of the protest the people called on me to serve as their spokesman. In accepting this responsibility my mind, consciously or unconsciously, was driven back to the Sermon on the Mount [preached by Jesus] and the Gandhian [pioneered by M.K. Gandhi] method of non-violent resistance. This principle became the guiding light of our movement. ...
The experience in Montgomery did more to clarify my thinking on the question of non-violence than all of the books that I had read. As the days unfolded I became more and more convinced of the power of non-violence. Living through the actual experience of the protest, non-violence became more than a method to which I gave intellectual assent (agreement); it became a commitment to a way of life.

D. Howard Pitney, Martin Luther King Jr, Malcolm X, and the Civil Rights Struggle of the 1950s and 1960s: a brief history with documents. Boston: Bedford/St Martin's, 2004, p.43

Source O: Martin Luther King reminisces on the Montgomery bus boycott

In December 1956, the Montgomery Bus Company agreed to integrate passengers on its buses. When the news was announced Martin Luther King published a leaflet that was distributed to African Americans involved in the protest:

'Remember that this is not a victory for Negroes alone, but for all Montgomery and the South. Do not boast! Do not brag! Be quiet but friendly; proud but not arrogant. Be loving enough to absorb evil and understanding enough to turn an enemy into a friend. If there is violence in word or deed it must not be our people who commit it.'

www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAmontgomeryB.htm

Source P: Martin Luther King's reaction to victory in the boycott

Activity 3: Using a variety of sources to determine the nature and significance of a historical event

1. Read Source L.
   1.1 What message did all the practices described send black Americans?
   1.2 How would they have made black Americans feel?

2. Read Source M.
   2.1 What does the fact that at first no one moved when they were told to tell you?
   2.2 What qualities in Rosa Parks are revealed by her refusal to stand?

3. Study Source N.
   3.1 Explain the message of the cartoon.
   3.2 What does the response of the black man in the cartoon suggest about black people's reaction to the Birmingham bus boycott?

4. Read Source O.
   4.1 Explain from your own knowledge what is meant by the Gandhian method of non-violent resistance.
   4.2 Describe the effect that the Montgomery bus boycott had on Martin Luther King's thinking.

5. Read Source P.
   5.1 Explain how victory for the bus boycotters in Montgomery was 'not a victory for Negroes alone, but for all Montgomery and the South'.
   5.2 How does Source P relate to Source O?
   5.3 Why does Martin Luther King give the advice to his followers he does in Source O?

[35]
Unit 4: School desegregation: Case study (Little Rock, Arkansas)

In 1954, in the case of Brown vs the Board of Education, the US Supreme Court ruled that separate facilities for whites and blacks were unconstitutional. This meant that schools and universities would have to be desegregated. There was much resistance to this decision among whites in the South.

In September 1957, nine black students were enrolled at the all-white Central High School in the town of Little Rock, Arkansas (pronounced ‘Arkansaw’). Governor Orval Faubus decided to prevent the entry of the black children to the school, using the Arkansas National Guard (troops). On the first day of school, one of the nine, Elizabeth Eckford, found herself confronting an angry white crowd which had gathered to ensure that the black children could not enter the school. Fortunately for her, one white woman, Grace Lorch, helped her to the bus stop and on to a bus so that she could get home safely. (Cries of ‘Hang her’ had been heard.)

By preventing the entry of the black children to the school, Governor Faubus had defied federal law, and so President Eisenhower sent in paratroopers to protect the children on their way to and from the school and also at school. One paratrooper was assigned to each of the black students. However, they were still subjected to much abuse, both verbal and physical by white students. (The soldiers could not, for example, enter toilets, changing rooms, the cafeteria, and classrooms.) One of the black students, Minniejean Brown, eventually reacted to constant provocation by dropping her dish of chilli and spilling some of it over two of the white boys who were interfering with her. She was suspended and later expelled. However, in May 1958, one of the Little Rock Nine, Ernest Green, succeeded in becoming the first black student to graduate from Central High School.

In September 1958, Governor Faubus closed all of Little Rock’s schools to prevent desegregation. He planned on making them private, segregated institutions. After a lengthy legal battle, the federal courts declared the governor’s action unconstitutional, and in August 1959, the schools were reopened. A year’s schooling had been lost, and Governor Faubus had lost the battle to keep Little Rock’s schools segregated.

I am part of the group that became known as the Little Rock Nine ... I was not prepared for what actually happened.

I was more concerned about what I would wear, whether we could finish my dress in time ... What I was wearing, was that okay? Would it look good? The night before when the governor [Orval Faubus] went on television [September 2] and announced that he had called out the Arkansas National Guard, I thought he had done this to ensure the protection of all the students. We did not have a telephone. So, inevitably we were not contacted to let us know that Daisy Bates of NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] had arranged for some ministers to accompany the students in a group. And so it was I that arrived alone.
I expected I would go to school as I did before on a city bus. So, I walked a few blocks to the bus stop, got on the bus, and rode to within two blocks of the school. I got off the bus and I noticed along the street that there were many more cars than usual. And I remember hearing the murmur of a crowd. But when I got to the corner where the school was, I was reassured seeing these soldiers circling school grounds. And I saw students going to school. I saw the guards break ranks as students approached the sidewalks, so that they could pass through to get to school.

And [as] I approached the guards at the corner, as I had seen other students do, they closed ranks. So, I thought maybe I am not supposed to enter at this point. So, I walked further down the line of guards to where there was another sidewalk and I attempted to pass through there. But when I stopped up, they crossed rifles. And again I said to myself maybe I'm supposed to go down to where the main entrance is. So I walked toward the centre of the street and when I got to about the middle and I approached the guard he directed me across the street into the crowd. It was only then that I realized that they were barring me so that I wouldn't [couldn't] go to school.

As I stepped out into the street, the people who had been across the street start[ed] surging forward behind me. So. I headed in the opposite direction to where there was another bus stop. Safety to me meant getting to the bus stop. I think I sat there for a long time before the bus came. In the meantime, people were screaming behind me. What I would have described as a crowd before, to my ears sounded like a mob.

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Source Q: "I am Elizabeth Eckford"

Did you know?

A book has been written about the relationship between Elizabeth Eckford and Hazel Bryant Massery, entitled Elizabeth and Hazel: two women of Little Rock, by David Margolick, published by Yale University Press, in 2011.

Source R: Photograph of Elizabeth Eckford after being turned away from Central High School, Little Rock, Arkansas, on 4 September 1957, by members of the Arkansas National Guard. The young woman screaming at Elizabeth was Hazel Bryant. The two were reconciled in 1997, forty years after the event. Far right, is Grace Lord, who afterwards helped Elizabeth on to a bus for her safety.
Algebra class was a haven [safe place] for me. The teacher, Mrs Helen Conrad, let it be known from the first day that she would tolerate no nonsense from anyone who opposed my presence. She was emphatic about it and the class responded accordingly. It was in this class also that I met Robin Woods, a white student who shared her textbook with me. Since my books and other school supplies were routinely destroyed by fellow-students, I would come to class often with no supplies. Robin simply pulled her desk next to mine and we shared her book — an act that did not win her friends or favour. Her act of kindness was interpreted as a violation of the social code that outlawed any contact between black students and white students, especially black males and white females. Students who befriended any of the nine of us were labelled ‘nigger lover’ and shunned by those who wanted to preserve the old social order. Robin did not allow that kind of thinking to interfere with her choices. [Later she left the school because of negative pressure from her peers.]


Source S. One of the Little Rock Nine, Terrence J. Roberts describes his algebra class.

Did you know?

One of the Little Rock Nine, Melba Pattillo Beals, has written her account of that dramatic year (1957–1958) at Central High School, Little Rock, Arkansas. It is called Warriors Don’t Cry (published by Simon & Schuster in 2007) and is well worth reading for the detail it gives of the treatment meted out to the African-American students and the vivid descriptions of the conflicting emotions they went through.

Activity 4: Using different kinds of sources to develop empathy

1. Read Source Q.

1.1 What sort of feelings must Elizabeth have had when she arrived at school that morning to find the situation described in the passage? (Try to put yourself in her position.) Quote from the passage in support of your answer.

1.2 ‘What I would have described as a crowd before, to my ears [now] sounded like a mob.’

Write a paragraph in which you describe the difference between a ‘crowd’ and a ‘mob’, and what this meant to Elizabeth Eckford. Your paragraph will be assessed with the rubric on page 393.

2. Study Source R. Try to describe what may have prompted the girl shouting at Elizabeth (Hazel Bryant) to behave as she did.

3. Read Source S. What do we learn from the behaviour of people like Mrs Conrad and Robin Woods?
Unit 5: Short-term and long-term gains

As used below, short-term gains mean those that occurred quite soon after the Civil Rights Movement began in earnest, while long-term gains refer to gains that had long-term effects. According to these definitions, a short-term gain could also be a long-term one.

Among the short-term gains of the Civil Rights Movement were the following:
- The passing of the Civil Rights Act by the American Congress in 1964. This outlawed discrimination based on racial, ethnic, national, religious, and gender identity.
- The passing of the Voting Rights Act by the American Congress in 1965. This made illegal any discrimination in voting practice. These included literacy tests, which had been used in the South to disqualify large numbers of black voters.
- A 1968 Civil Rights Act made it an offence to discriminate on the basis of race or colour in the sale or rental of housing.

In addition to both the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, other long-term gains of the Civil Rights Movement included:
- Black people gained a new self-confidence and self-esteem as a result of the Civil Rights Movement. This is still apparent in American life today.
- African-Americans also gained a new sympathy and respect from their white fellow-countrymen and -women. A sign of the latter was the institution in 1983 of Martin Luther King Junior Day in the US on the third Monday of January every year, around King's birthday on 15 January.
- The general focus on opposing social injustice both in the US and throughout the world is partly a result of the American Civil Rights Movement. In an early speech, Martin Luther King had spoken of the Montgomery bus boycott as 'just one aspect of a world-wide revolt of oppressed peoples'. Quoted in: A. Fairclough, Makers of the Twentieth Century: Martin Luther King. London: Sphere Books, 1990, p.131. Reproduced with permission by Adam Fairclough.

Despite these gains:
- The general economic position of black people in America remained significantly inferior after the Civil Rights Movement. This would need to be addressed.
- The Black Power Movement was on the rise. (See Chapter 11.) Stokely Carmichael's response to the assassination of Martin Luther King was:

When white America killed Dr King, she opened the eyes of every black man in this country ... There no longer needs to be any intellectual discussion. Black people know that they have to get guns.


Activity 5: Writing an essay on the gains of the Civil Rights Movement

Make a table to show the short- and long-term gains of the Civil Rights Movement between 1955 and 1968. Write an essay, referring to your table, to discuss the Movement's degree of success. You may include criticisms, if they are supported with arguments.

Your essay will be assessed with the rubric on page 392.
Skills focus

History essays

Essay-writing in History tests the ability to interpret a topic or question, formulate a logical and reasoned response, and to present this in an attractive, readable way.

History essays are not simply about repeating the facts. The focus of essay questions is on the development of independent argument based on the selection of relevant historical evidence in well-structured essays.

Before deciding what content to include in your essay you must analyse the question.

The most important words to identify in the essay topic are the words that indicate the subject matter (that is, names and places and dates) as well as the key instruction words.

Many essay questions will use more than one instruction word. Identify and analyse each instruction word on its own, then in relation to each other and to the topic as a whole.

Here are a few of the most commonly used instruction words and what they mean.

- do you agree that – examine the evidence and offer your opinion on the topic
- to what extent – provide an indication of how much you agree with something or not
- account for – give reasons for
- give an account of – describe
- analyse – break down into the component parts and show how they are related and why they are important
- comment on – discuss, giving valid views on something. This instruction is often used with a quotation or statement and learners are expected to give an opinion about it, supported by historical evidence.
- compare – show the similarities (not the differences) between two or more things
- contrast – show the ways in which two or more things are different from each other
- criticise – gives one’s opinion of something, showing its good and bad points, strengths and weaknesses, and supporting this opinion with facts and careful argument
- describe – write a detailed account in a well-structured logical sequence in which the event(s) can be clearly seen.
- discuss – examine in as much detail as possible within the allowed time limits
- evaluate/assess – give one’s opinion or an expert’s opinion of the truth, importance or value of a concept or theory, including the advantages or disadvantages
- explain – give reasons, or provide an analysis of the facts
Programme of assessment: Essay task

Discuss to what extent and why the following forms of protest against segregation were effective:
(a) boycotts
(b) sit-ins (and similar forms of protest)
(c) marches.

Some suggestions:
There are, in fact, two questions here:
1. To what extent was each form of protest effective?
2. Why was each form of protest effective?

- Both must be answered in each case.
- Use examples. A good example of the boycott method was the Montgomery bus boycott. This was undoubtedly successful. What made it so, though? Consider the unity of the black community in Montgomery. Why was it so unified?
- Consider the losses to the bus company.
- Consider the leadership of Dr King and the other ministers, and Dr King's speaking ability.
- What role was played by the US Supreme Court?
- Sit-ins: Very public – this could generate support but also violent opposition. Good or bad? Also, it was difficult for mass public support for such action to be shown. This might call for marches, which might cause further violent reaction. Loss of business was a factor again, through negative publicity. As examples, you could look at the Greensboro action and the Birmingham campaign.
- Marches: Very public – much publicity generated, including violent reaction, which meant further publicity. American public opinion was shocked, for example, by the over-reaction of Birmingham police (dogs and high-pressure water hoses).
- The March on Washington was a great public event, extremely well covered by the media, attended by a quarter of a million people, with the appearance of famous artists like Bob Dylan and Joan Baez, and the delivery of a wonderfully rhetorical speech by Martin Luther King.
- Remember to introduce your topic and reach clear conclusions based on your content. You should not usually include new content in a conclusion.
- Your essay will be assessed with the rubric on page 392. Remember that you are assessed both on content – your hard subject matter – and presentation – the way you present your material and argue your case.
- Paragraph your essay. Plan briefly (in point form) before you start writing. This is crucially important! You will find that the essay goes much more easily and faster when it's been well planned, and you will get a better result too.