

6c Culture Corner

The Civil Rights Movement in the USA

"I have a dream that my four 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." Martin Luther King Jr (1929-1968)



1 Until the mid-1950s in the USA, African Americans were not treated equally. They couldn't find work easily and even then they got the worst jobs and received low wages. They were also separated from whites in public places like schools and theatres and on public transport. One day, though, an incident on a bus sparked a revolution.

2 On 1st December, 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, an African American woman called Rosa Parks wouldn't give up her bus seat to a white man and move to the back of the bus where black people had to sit. Rosa was arrested, but her protest had real impact and attracted the attention of a man who would soon lead the Civil Rights Movement: Martin Luther King.

3 King was born in 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia. He studied Theology and became a minister. During his youth, King was inspired by Indian leader, Mahatma Gandhi, who encouraged non-violent protests to create positive change in society.

4 King admired Rosa Parks for her bravery and began a boycott of Montgomery buses, with African Americans refusing to travel on them for over a year. The protest resulted in a ban on black and white segregation on public transport. His non-violent campaign for political change attracted many supporters, including writers, artists and politicians of all races.

5 In 1963, King led thousands of people on the historic 'March on Washington', the home of the government and gave his famous 'I have a dream' speech. The following year Congress passed the Civil Rights Act which ruled that racial discrimination was illegal. Despite racist opposition, King had achieved incredible results. However, in 1968, tragedy struck and he was assassinated. The world mourned his loss.

6 Martin Luther King's legacy lives on. He is an inspirational figure because he changed society in a positive and peaceful way. Americans now celebrate Martin Luther King Day every year on 15th January to ensure that he is never forgotten.

Check these words

judge, treat equally, spark a revolution, protest, have an impact, be inspired, bravery, boycott, result in, ban, segregation, race, march, Congress, pass an Act, rule, racial discrimination, assassinate, mourn his loss, legacy

Match the headings to the correct paragraph:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____

A REFUSE TO BE MOVED

B INTRODUCE A GREAT LEADER

C GO FROM GREAT SUCCESS TO SADNESS

D CONTINUE WHAT SHE STARTED

E FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO VOTE

F LIVE WITH INEQUALITY

G REMEMBER A NATIONAL HERO

3 Fill in:

positive

sparked

impact

struck

treated

legacy

attracted

wages

banned

mourned

- 1 All people should be equally. 
- 2 Women used to be paid low . 
- 3 His speech a revolution that changed people's lives. 
- 4 Their protest had a real on the whole world. 
- 5 He worldwide attention to the problem of famine. 
- 6 Racial discrimination should be in all countries. 
- 7 If we work together, we can bring changes in society. 
- 8 The whole nation his loss. 
- 9 Tragedy in 1948 when Gandhi was shot dead. 
- 10 Bob Marley died at the age of 36, but his lives on. 

WB exercises:

1 a) Match the words to form phrases.

| | | | |
|--|---|---------------|-------------------------|
|  1 <input type="text"/> |  | civil | A figure |
|  2 <input type="text"/> |  | low | B discrimination |
|  3 <input type="text"/> |  | public | C wages |
|  4 <input type="text"/> |  | witness | D change |
|  5 <input type="text"/> |  | political | E places |
|  6 <input type="text"/> |  | racial | F rights |
|  7 <input type="text"/> |  | inspirational | G statement |

1 b) ★★ Complete the sentences with some of the phrases below. ...

civil rights

low wages

public places

positive change

political change

racial discrimination

inspirational figure

- 1 White and African Americans were separated in ... until the mid-1950s. ()
- 2 Martin Luther King campaigned for ... such as laws to stop segregation. ()
- 3 Many African-American workers received ... in comparison to whites. ()
- 4 The work of Martin Luther King led to the outlawing of ()

2 ★★ Choose the correct item. ...

- 1 Martin Luther King **had/saw** a dream of equal rights for everyone. ()
- 2 King's peaceful protest **sparked/attracted** the attention of many famous people. ()
- 3 Whites and African-Americans were not **treated/campaigned** equally in the 1950s.
- 4 King **led/boycotted** the Civil Rights Movement. ()
- 5 The Civil Rights Movement **achieved/managed** results in a short period of time. ()

3 ★ Fill in: ...

struck

mourned

sparked

assassinated

resulted

inspired

- 1 The demonstrations in Alabama ... in a ban on segregation of blacks and whites. ()
- 2 King was ... by the teaching of Gandhi. ()
- 3 Tragedy ... () when Martin Luther King was ... in 1968. ()
The world ... () his loss.
- 4 A woman's refusal to move on a bus ... a revolution that changed America. ()