

Race relation (Read the text)

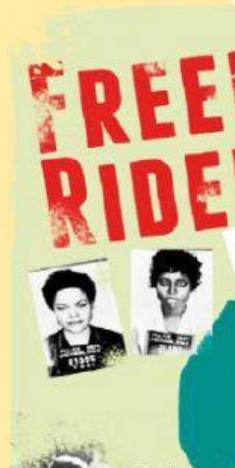
Freedom Riders

After the Second World War, African Americans who had served their country were not willing to return to a segregated society, where they would not be allowed to make use of the same public services, educational facilities and transport as white Americans. America was aware that change was necessary, but for many citizens, both black and white, it wasn't changing fast enough, especially in the south.

In 1960, the Supreme Court had ruled that African Americans had the right to use the same facilities as white people when travelling across the country. However, black people still faced hostility and racism in the south. At coach and rail stations in states such as Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, black travellers found signs in waiting rooms and restaurants that said 'Whites only'. These signs openly broke the laws of the country, but President Kennedy's government was more worried about the nuclear threat from the USSR than domestic issues.

As a result, a civil rights organisation called the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) decided that if they couldn't count on the government to enforce the law, they would force the country to sit up and notice the unconstitutional behaviour of the southern states. Thirteen people, black and white, were chosen to travel on two coaches from Washington, D.C. to New Orleans in Louisiana in the Deep South. The objective was to see what would happen when the African Americans attempted to exercise their rights in the southern states.

However, not everybody in the civil rights movement thought the trip was a good idea. Neither Martin Luther King nor other prominent leaders thought that the Freedom Riders, as they became known, would arrive safely at their destination, and told them to call it off. Despite these warnings, on 4 May 1961, the thirteen volunteers boarded two coaches with three journalists and set off on a trip that would become front page news around the world.



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1 Read the text and answer the questions (7 points)

1 Which things the Freedom Rider did? (1p)

2 What did African Americans not want to experience again after the war? (1p)

3 What did some citizens think of the changes taking place in American society? (1p)

4 Why was there a problem with the Supreme Court's decision about transportation? (1 p)

5 Why didn't the Kennedy government show much interest? (1p)

6 What was CORE'S objective? (1p)

7 Why were some prominent civil rights leaders against the trip? (1p)

2. Listen. Are the sentences true or false? Write T or F. (6 points)

- 1 The Freedom Riders thought they were well prepared. __
- 2 The Freedom Riders were attacked in Rock Hill. __
- 3 Martin Luther King warned them about the next stop on their journey. __
- 4 A policeman acted to stop the crowd in Anniston. __
- 5 A local police chief promised to protect the Freedom Riders. __
- 6 The racist signs were removed. __

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3. Express your opinion. (6 points)

1. Do you think peaceful protests have any effect on governments? Why? /Why not? (3points)

2. Would you have joined the Freedom Riders or an organization like it if you had suffered injustice? Why?/ Why not? (3 points)

3. Are there any circumstances when you think violent protest is justified? Can you give any examples? (3 points)