



### Summary 1954-60

By the early 1950s, slavery had been abolished and black Americans were equal to white Americans by law. However, black Americans were not actually treated as equal, as all over the USA black Americans lived in the worst areas and had access to the worst facilities. This was at its worst in the South, as most Southern states had a system of segregation which kept black and white communities separate. For example, local laws meant black Americans could not use the same toilets or restaurants as white people. Black Americans had the right to vote, but were stopped by a system that deliberately discriminated against them, by threats and by violence. Some black Americans in the South tried to improve their lives by joining the civil rights movement to campaign for equality. During the early stages of the civil rights movement, progress was made in education and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, with the culmination of the Civil Rights Act in 1957. However, with this progress being made, Southern opposition to civil rights grew as attempts were made to hinder the success of the movement.

#### Progress in Education

One of the biggest segregation issues in the South was education. The Brown V. Topeka case was significant in ruling against segregation in schools. However, with no timescale placed on desegregation, this was still a problem in Southern schools as seen in the case of the Little Rock Nine. As threats of violence increased, civil rights groups became aware of the power of the media to help their cause.

#### The Montgomery Bus Boycott

Rosa Parks was arrested after refusing to give up her bus seat for a white man. This sparked the bus boycott which lasted 381 and almost all black people in Montgomery took part. As head of the MIA, Martin Luther King became the voice of the campaign. He understood the importance of publicity, which was crucial for success. The boycott ended in 1956 with the Supreme Court decision to segregate public transport.

**1954** Brown v. Topeka case ruled AGAINST segregated education

**1955** Murder of Emmett Till, a 14 year old African American, by the KKK

**1955** Start of Montgomery Bus Boycott— December (Rosa Parks)

**1956** Montgomery Bus Boycott ends. Segregation on public transport ruled unlawful

### Enquiry Question: *What kind of change could African Americans see in the period 1954-1960?*



#### Key Figures

<b>Emmet Till</b>	A 14-year-old from Chicago who was murdered in 1955 by two white men whilst visiting relatives in Mississippi. His mother insisted on an open-casket at his funeral which gained much publicity for
<b>Linda Brown</b>	In 1951, the Browns and 12 other families went to court to fight for their black children to be able to attend the nearest school which was 'white' in the Brown V. Topeka case.
<b>Rosa Parks</b>	In 1955, Parks was arrested after refusing to give up her seat on a bus for a white person. This sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott.
<b>Martin Luther King</b>	Civil Rights leader who came to prominence during the Montgomery

#### Challenge

*Why did Emmett Till's mother decide to have an open viewing of his body at the funeral home?*

*Why did Rosa Parks become the figurehead of the Montgomery Bus Boycott?*

*What impact did the Little Rock 9 have on attitudes towards integration in the South?*

**1956** The Southern Manifesto signed by Southern Politicians to encourage segregation

**1957** President Eisenhower used National Guard to protect 9 black students at Little Rock High School

**1957** Civil Rights Act: all people had right to vote and Federal Government to look for racial discrimination

**1960** Civil Rights Act: aimed to protect voting rights of black citizens

## TIMELINE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS

## Other Resources

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zcpcwmn/revision/1>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S64zRnnn4Po>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JeE2WqlHFTc>

