



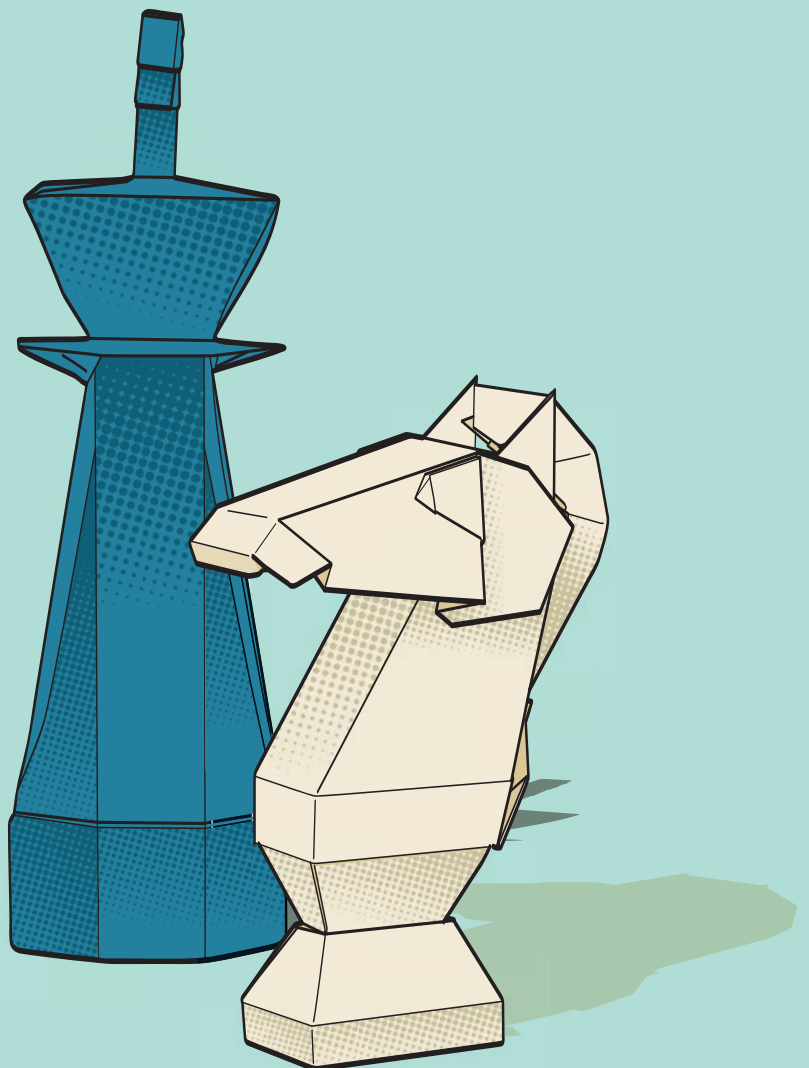
Pearson
Revise

Pearson Edexcel GCSE (9–1)

History

**The USA, 1954–75: conflict at
home and abroad**

Revision Guide and Workbook





Pearson Edexcel GCSE (9–1)

History

The USA, 1954–75: conflict at home and abroad

Revision Guide and Workbook

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A small bit of small print

Edexcel publishes Sample Assessment Material and the Specification on its website. This is the official content and this book should be used in conjunction with it. The questions in *Now try this* have been written to help you practise every topic in the book. Remember: the real exam questions may not look like this.

Had a look ☐Nearly there ☐Nailed it! ☐Civil rights,
1954–60

The early 1950s

Across the USA in the 1950s, black Americans were treated as second-class citizens. In the South they faced **segregation**, **discrimination** and attempts to prevent them from voting. Organisations such as the NAACP and CORE campaigned to improve black civil rights.

Segregation and discrimination in the Southern states

Racial segregation in the South in the early 1950s aimed to prevent black and white Americans mixing on public transport and in schools, restaurants and other public places.

Racist '**Jim Crow**' laws were used to segregate black and white Americans.

The law stated that it was legal to segregate as long as services were 'separate but equal'.



Segregated public facilities and services included cinemas, toilets, schools and transport.

In reality, services for black Americans were often inferior to those for white people.

Turn to page 2 to find out more about the principle of 'separate but equal'.

Students protest to keep schools segregated in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1955.

Discrimination and violence in the Southern states

- The majority of white people viewed black Americans as racially inferior.
- Racist white officials, including police and judges, were often members of the Ku Klux Klan.
- The frequent assaults and murders of black people were not properly investigated or prosecuted.
- Black people were not allowed to sit on juries in a court of law.

Go to page 6 to find out more about the Ku Klux Klan.

CORE and the NAACP made more progress in the Northern states, where they had more white support. Both organisations were racially integrated.

Voting rights

- White gangs physically stopped black Americans from voting, and sometimes attacked them for trying to register to vote.
- Some Southern states, such as Georgia and Virginia, passed laws making it harder for black people to vote. For example, they used unfair literacy tests to make it harder for black Americans to qualify for the vote.
- Some Southern states introduced the 'grandfather clause' whereby voters had to prove their forefathers had voted. For descendants of slaves this was impossible as they had been barred from voting.
- Sometimes white employers sacked black workers if they registered to vote or voted.

Civil rights organisations

NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People)	CORE (Congress of Racial Equality)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was set up in 1909. • They fought for civil rights using the legal system and the courts. • They defended black people who had been unfairly convicted of crimes. • It focused on overturning 'separate but equal' ruling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was set up in 1942. • They had a smaller membership than NAACP. • Members used non-violent direct action; they trained local activists in these techniques. • They operated mostly in Northern states. • In early years of the organisation, most members were white and middle class.

Now try this

Complete a table with 'Bad treatment of black Americans in the early 1950s' in the left column and 'Organised resistance to bad treatment' in the right column. Add at least **three** points to each column.

Brown v. Topeka, 1954

In 1952, the NAACP put five desegregation cases together and took them to the Supreme Court as *Brown versus the Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas* – otherwise known as *Brown v. Topeka*.

Key features of *Brown v. Topeka*

My name is Linda Brown. I am a black American student who became famous after my experiences of segregated school education were used in a legal case brought to the Supreme Court by the NAACP in 1954. The legal case was made against the Topeka Board of Education. It argued that the principle of 'separate but equal' in schools was **unconstitutional**, as it damaged black children. In the case, a key point was that I had to walk past my local white school to reach the nearest black school. Segregated schools made me feel separate and not equal to white kids.



For more information on the situation of black Americans in the Southern states in the early 1950s, turn to page 1.

Linda Brown, photographed outside the school in Topeka, 10 years after the legal case was first made.

In 1896, the Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation was constitutional as long as facilities were 'separate but equal'. However, conditions for black Americans were often separate and unequal. For example, black schools were often underfunded compared to white schools and had poor facilities.

Timeline

Brown v. Topeka, 1954

Dec 1952 The judges in the case asked to hear more legal advice. Earl Warren became new Chief Justice.

May 1954 The Supreme Court ruled that segregated education was unconstitutional. However, the Court set no time limit for the desegregation of schools.

May 1955 A second court ruling said that **desegregation** in schools should happen 'with all deliberate speed'.

• **1952** NAACP took school segregation cases to the Supreme Court, claiming the **14th Amendment** (which includes clauses on citizenship and equal protection) as they made black children feel inferior.

• **July 1954** In the 'Deep South' (including Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and South Carolina), White Citizens' Councils were set up to stop desegregation. They were prepared to use extreme violence.

• **1957** 723 school districts had desegregated education.

Short-term significance

- *Brown* rulings overturned the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, which allowed public facilities, including schools, to be segregated.
- There was a white backlash and membership of the Ku Klux Klan increased.
- Black students and teachers, and their families, faced threats and hostility in desegregated schools.
- Some good schools for black Americans were shut down.
- Many Southern states found ways to avoid complying with the court rulings.

Long-term significance

- Awareness of civil rights issues in the Southern states increased.
- Rulings were an inspiration for other desegregation campaigns.
- White Americans moved out of areas where black Americans lived, to avoid forced desegregation.

Desegregation: process of replacing racial segregation with racial integration.

Now try this

Write **one** short paragraph to explain the long-term significance of the *Brown* case.

Had a look ☐Nearly there ☐Nailed it! ☐Civil rights,
1954–60

Little Rock High School, 1957

In 1957, at Little Rock High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, nine black students – known as the 'Little Rock Nine' – attended the newly desegregated high school. They were treated very badly by white Americans who wanted the segregation of schools to continue in the South.

The 'Little Rock Nine'

Following the *Brown* verdict, a decision was made for school desegregation in Little Rock.

About 75 black students applied to join Little Rock High School; the school board accepted 25. However, their families were intimidated with threats if they tried to take their places at the school. At the start of the 1957 school year, just nine students were still planning to register. These students were called the 'Little Rock Nine' by the campaigners who took up their cause.

Governor Orval Faubus

After the 1954 *Brown* verdict, Orval Faubus, state governor of Arkansas, became a fierce opponent of school integration.

In 1958, Faubus closed every school in Little Rock, in an attempt to stop racial integration taking place. This lasted for a year but pressure from parents eventually forced him to reopen schools.

Events at Little Rock, 1957

- 1 The *Brown* case led to the school board agreeing that Little Rock High School would be desegregated on 3 September 1957, at the start of the new school term.
- 2 The NAACP arranged for the new black students to arrive there together on 4 September.
- 3 Faubus sent 250 state troops to surround the school when the Little Rock Nine were due to start; he said this was to 'keep the peace'. This blocked the black students from gaining entrance.
- 4 Elizabeth Eckford did not get the notification to arrive with the rest of the group. She was targeted by the crowd and racially abused.
- 5 District judges and lawyers for the NAACP used the courts to challenge Faubus and force him to withdraw the state troops.
- 6 On 24 September, President Eisenhower sent in federal troops, to ensure black students could attend school without being attacked. The black students were finally able to enter the school successfully.



Seventeen year-old Elizabeth Eckford is followed by an aggressive crowd as she tries to enter Little Rock High School, 4 September 1957.

Presidential intervention

Worldwide media coverage of the events at Little Rock High School forced President Eisenhower to get involved, as the USA's image was being damaged abroad.

Rioting outside Little Rock High after Arkansas state troops were removed led Eisenhower to send in 1000 federal troops. Eisenhower used a presidential order, as he knew Congress would disapprove of the decision to intervene in state affairs. While he wanted to avoid using federal powers, he was concerned about white opposition to integration. Eisenhower wanted to improve black civil rights while avoiding potential violent unrest about racial integration in the Deep South, where opposition was strongest.

Significance of events at Little Rock

- Hundreds of reporters from local and international news stations reported the events. People were shocked by the coverage of how children were being racially abused.
- There was continued resistance to school integration after 1957. In the South, many schools shut down rather than desegregate.
- The first black student graduated from Little Rock High School in 1958, but fellow white students refused to sit with him at the ceremony.
- Even 10 years later, black students attending newly integrated Southern schools were subjected to violence, intimidation and exclusion by teachers and peers.

Now try this

Give **three** ways in which Little Rock was important in the campaign for desegregation.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott, 1955

On 1 December 1955, a black woman called Rosa Parks broke segregation laws in Montgomery, Alabama, by refusing to give up her seat on a bus to a white person. She was arrested and fined. Parks' decision sparked a mass boycott of the buses by those campaigning for civil rights.

Causes of the boycott

Long-term causes	Short-term causes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Women's Political Council in Montgomery had focused on bus discrimination since 1950.• The Montgomery bus company discriminated against black passengers by forcing them to sit at the back of buses and vacate their seats for white people.• Requests to the bus company to change their rules were not listened to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• On 1 December 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat in the 'black' area of a bus to a white man who had no seat.• Police arrested and charged Parks under Montgomery's segregation laws.

Events of the boycott, 1955–56

- **5 December 1955:** civil rights activists in Montgomery met to discuss a boycott of the city buses. They formed the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) and elected Martin Luther King as their chairman.
- **8 December:** the MIA met bus company officials, who refused to change the segregation on their buses. The MIA decided to continue the boycott until they won. They decided that no black Americans would use the bus service until the situation changed.
- The MIA held meetings with church groups and other organisations to plan car sharing. The first car pools began on **12 December** and grew to involve over 300 cars.
- The MIA also negotiated reduced cab fares with black drivers to enable boycotters to travel by taxi for the price of a standard bus fare.
- As the boycott continued, opposition grew. On **30 January 1956**, Martin Luther King's home was bombed. King responded by calling for peaceful protest and no retaliation.
- The violence in response to the peaceful protest increased media coverage of the boycott; media reports were largely sympathetic to the civil rights campaigners.
- Non-violent direct action was emerging as a clear and effective campaigning approach.

For more on Martin Luther King and his role in the civil rights movement, turn to pages 5 and 6.

Significance of Rosa Parks

Rosa Parks' refusal to accept segregation on Montgomery's buses triggered a successful desegregation campaign that spurred on other civil rights activists.

Parks was a married, middle-aged woman. It was difficult to criticise her for bad behaviour or not being respectable.

She understood the principles of non-violent direct action.



She had already been involved in campaigns for black voter registration.

She was secretary of the Montgomery NAACP.

Rosa Parks making a civil rights speech a decade after the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Now try this

- 1 List **three** ways that Rosa Parks was significant in the Montgomery Bus Boycott.
- 2 List **three** other factors that were important to the success of the boycott.

Importance of the boycott

The success of the Montgomery Bus Boycott was very important to the civil rights movement: it paved the way for further campaigns against segregation. It also brought Martin Luther King to the forefront of the civil rights movement and proved that non-violent direct action could work.

Reasons for the boycott's success

- 1 **Well organised.** Existing civil rights groups meant the structure was already in place to get the campaign up and running. The MIA coordinated the campaign effectively.
- 2 **Committed to success.** The boycott continued despite the threats the boycotters received. Some were told they would be fired from jobs and some were physically attacked; however, they were prepared to continue.
- 3 **Well publicised.** The campaign was publicised through church meetings and local newspapers. This helped supporters get organised and communicate with each other, to lend support.
- 4 **The bus company was hurt financially,** as the vast majority of its customers were black Americans, so it lost a lot of money running empty buses.

Supreme Court ruling

The NAACP brought a case to desegregate Montgomery buses. On 1 February 1956, their lawyers filed *Browder v. Gayle*, against bus segregation in Montgomery. They argued it was against the 14th Amendment because of the guarantee to equal protection.

- On 5 June, the Supreme Court ordered that segregation on buses was unconstitutional: buses should be desegregated. They gave the *Brown* decision as their reason, as it had set the precedent that segregation was unconstitutional. The bus company appealed but the appeal was rejected on 17 December.
- On 20 December, the MIA finally called off the boycott. Racially integrated bus services began on 21 December.

For details of the *Brown v. Topeka* case (1954), turn to page 2.

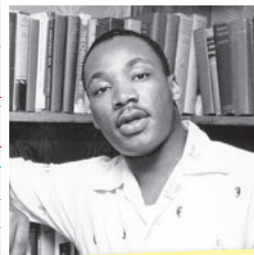
Significance of Martin Luther King's leadership

King was a pastor; he emphasised Christian values of love and humility.

He always advocated a non-violent approach.

King made many powerful speeches that had a huge impact on his audiences.

King tried to appeal to all Americans regardless of race – he appealed to people's shared humanity.



Martin Luther King in 1956.

He played an important part in the Montgomery Bus Boycott, helping to boost morale and raise funds for the MIA.

He was arrested in 1956 for his part in organising the boycott.

Jo Ann Gibson Robinson (civil rights activist), E.D. Nixon (civil rights campaigner and union organiser) and Ralph Abernathy (leader of the SCLC) were King's fellow campaign leaders.

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)

- It was set up in January 1957, to coordinate church-based protest across the South.
- It was led by Martin Luther King and Ralph Abernathy.
- Members campaigned against segregation.
- They used non-violent direct action.
- They secured black and white membership.
- The earliest major campaign was for voter registration.

The 1957 Civil Rights Act

The *Brown* case and the bus boycott led to increased public support for civil rights and a civil rights act being passed in Congress. The act aimed to increase black voter registration, make it illegal to obstruct voter registration and allow federal courts to prosecute states that did not guarantee citizen's voting rights. However, in practice, all-white juries in the South were unlikely to uphold federal prosecutions of state violations of voting rights.

Now try this

Design a concept map to show the impact of the Montgomery Bus Boycott up to 1960.

Opposition to civil rights: the KKK and violence

Black Americans in the South faced open intimidation and violence, often carried out by members of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). Media coverage of some of these cases helped to raise awareness of the terrible injustices black Americans faced in the Southern states.



Klan members burn a cross at a rally. The KKK used this symbol to intimidate and spread fear.

Activities of the Ku Klux Klan

- Set up in 1865 after black slaves won their freedom. The KKK wanted to stop black Americans from gaining equality.
- Operated mostly in the Southern states.
- Terrorised black American families by intimidation and extreme violence, including murder, often by **lynching** (illegal execution, usually carried out by a mob).
- Only so-called WASPs (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants) could join.
- They wore hoods, as membership was secret, although in reality many Southern states' law enforcement officers were involved or sympathetic to the Klan's aims.
- Klan members also attacked Jews, Catholics and liberals, but their most extreme hatred was for black Americans.

The murder of Emmett Till, 1955

- Emmett Till, a 14-year-old black boy from Chicago, went to Mississippi in 1955 to visit family.
- Carolyn Bryant, a white woman, said that Till made sexual advances when he went to her store. Till's cousins, who were waiting outside, said he only wolf-whistled at her.
- The next night, Bryant's husband and his half-brother abducted Till and beat him severely. They shot him and threw him into the river with a weight around his neck. Till's body was found three days later.
- Till's mother had an open viewing of the body in Chicago. This led to extensive media coverage, which fuelled widespread shock and outrage, especially in the North, where many were ignorant of the treatment of black Americans in the South.
- The murder trial was reported nationwide.
- The defendants were acquitted (found not guilty). They later sold their story to a magazine, admitting to the murder.

No justice for Emmett Till

Emmett Till's family did not get justice for his murder. After the trial, black people continued to be murdered in Mississippi and the killers were rarely convicted. For example, NAACP leader George W. Lee was also murdered in 1955; his murder remains unsolved. Media reporting of these injustices led to a public outcry and spurred on the growth of the civil rights movement.

The NAACP produced a booklet in 1955 called *M is for Mississippi and Murder*, highlighting the murders of black people in Mississippi in that year that went unpunished.

Emmett Till with his mother, Mamie Bradley, c. 1950. He was her only son.



Now try this

List **three** ways that the murder of Emmett Till was typical of the violence against black people in the 1950s.

Remember: Klan membership was secret, the KKK encouraged extreme violence against black people, and many state officials in the South were Klan members.

Political opposition to desegregation

Attempts to desegregate the South faced political opposition from national and local politicians. In addition, local people set up White Citizens' Councils to block any change.

Federal opposition to civil rights

- Attempts to introduce an effective Civil Rights Act were opposed by some Southern members of Congress.
- The 'Dixiecrats' (a splinter group from the Democratic Party made up of Southern politicians) had strong views about keeping segregation. By 1954, they had rejoined the Democrats, after previously breaking away due to disagreements about civil rights, because they believed they could have more influence from within the Democratic Party. They maintained their position on keeping segregation and protecting states' rights to retain laws that guaranteed white supremacy.
- Presidents needed the Dixiecrats' support in Congress, so had to take their views on board when creating new laws. They were fearful that the Dixiecrats would disrupt government. This hindered the cause for civil rights laws.

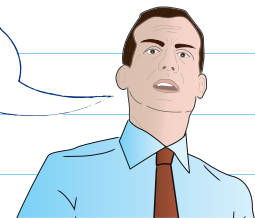
State opposition to civil rights



We want to keep segregation; it's our right! If federal laws force us to desegregate, we will find ways to oppose racial mixing.

The views of Southern governors and local state mayors ensured there was strong opposition to the civil rights movement and desegregation.

We only have white judges and juries in court. It's the best way to uphold justice.



Types of resistance

Some state officials resisted desegregation in the South in open ways, such as shutting down all state schools so they could not be integrated.

Other state officials used more devious ways to oppose desegregation. For example, some school admission tests were deliberately biased against black students, to prevent them from joining 'white' schools. Some states refused to end literacy tests and continued to disrupt opportunities for black voters to cast their vote at elections.



White Citizens' Councils organised protests and used threats of violence (or actual violence) against those who sought integration.

By using these underhand methods, state officials could claim to follow the letter of the law to desegregate; however, they did not stick to the spirit of desegregation laws.

White Citizens' Councils (WCC)

White Citizens' Councils were set up from 1954 onwards to stop desegregation. They had around 60000 members in the mid-1950s. They often began as organisations opposed to school desegregation in their local area after the *Brown* ruling. They opposed any desegregation, for example in libraries or swimming pools. As well as protesting and using violence, they used economic means to stop calls for desegregation: for example, in some towns WCC members sacked black employees who signed petitions or were involved in civil rights activities. Members feared that desegregation would lead to more calls for political and economic equality for black Americans.

Now try this

List **five** methods that some people used to stop desegregation in the Southern states.

Greensboro and the sit-in movement

The sit-ins at a lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1960 were significant to the civil rights campaign because they grew into a mass movement to challenge segregation in public places.

Events at Greensboro, 1960

- On 1 February 1960, four black students in North Carolina – David Richmond, Izell Blair, Franklin McCain and Joseph McNeil – waited to be served at a segregated lunch counter in the Woolworth department store.
- The students knew they would be asked to leave the 'whites only' area, but when told to do so by staff they refused to go. Instead, they held a 'sit-in', remaining in the store until closing time. Their aim was to generate publicity that would make Woolworth department stores end their policy of segregation.

Sit-in: form of non-violent protest during which protesters refuse to leave a designated place or area.

- The following day, 25 more students arrived to join the Greensboro sit-in.
- By 4 February, there were more than 300 students, both black and white, working in shifts to continue the protest. After a week the sit-ins spread to other towns in North Carolina.
- Due to the loss of earnings and the continued disruption to business, in July the Greensboro Woolworth store desegregated. However, other Woolworth stores in the Southern states took longer: some did not desegregate until 1965, despite many more sit-in protests.

Organisation of the sit-ins

As the Greensboro sit-ins continued, CORE and the SCLC sent experienced campaigners to train students in non-violent protest methods.

On 15 April 1960, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was set up, in order to organise the kind of non-violent protests used previously by Martin Luther King and by CORE. SNCC trained students to cope with the hostility and harassment they faced during sit-ins and other demonstrations such as being sworn at, pushed and having drinks thrown over them.

Key principles of non-violent direct action

- 👍 Demonstrate peacefully and visibly.
- 👍 Do not rise to provocation.
- 👍 Show your opponent up as a violent oppressor.



Demonstrators outside a Woolworth store in New York, on 13 February 1960, to protest against lunch counter discrimination.

White and black supporters: Some white Southerners joined CORE and SNCC. At first, the sit-ins were a protest organised by students, and mostly the students taking part were black. But by the end of 1960, campaigners were more mixed racially and no longer just students.

Media coverage: Positive news reports of the sit-ins resulted in support from black and white Americans in both the North and South. This led to demonstrations across the USA to challenge segregation in public spaces.

Significance of the Greensboro sit-ins

Visible to public: The sit-ins were a very visible form of public protest.

Spread quickly: Existing civil rights groups meant structures were already in place that helped the sit-ins to spread quickly.

Young people: Many young people thought that segregated lunch counters were wrong and humiliating, and were keen to protest against them.

Mass support: Large numbers of protesters (about 50 000 by autumn 1960) took part in the sit-ins.

Now try this

Write an acrostic poem using the name 'Greensboro' to sum up the events and significance of the protest at that time.

Remember, an acrostic poem is when the first letters of each line spell out a word or phrase.

Had a look ☐Nearly there ☐Nailed it! ☐Protest and
progress,
1960–75

Progress in civil rights, 1960–62

The years 1960–62 saw further examples of important progress for civil rights campaigners, who sought to speed up desegregation in public spaces and education.

Testing out Supreme Court rulings

- In 1956, the Supreme Court ruled that state transport must desegregate. However, bus station toilets and waiting rooms remained segregated, as these were not part of the ruling.
- In December 1960, the Supreme Court ordered desegregation of bus station facilities.
- In 1961, CORE activists organised bus journeys from the North to the Deep South, to test whether desegregation was really happening. CORE knew that segregation still existed, so its aim was to create negative media coverage of segregation so that the federal government would act to force states to desegregate.



Bus terminal in Tennessee showing a 'White Waiting Room' sign.

Timeline

The Freedom Riders, 1961

4 May Thirteen 'Freedom Riders, (a group of black and white Americans) started out from Washington, DC on two buses. The campaign organisers were CORE and the SCLC. Their aim was to show that desegregation of bus station facilities was not happening.

17 May SNCC organised ten Riders to bus from Nashville, Tennessee, to Birmingham, Alabama. No driver agreed to continue the journey, so the Riders stopped in Birmingham where a threatening crowd of segregationists confronted them.

24 May A police escort accompanied a new group of Freedom Riders travelling from Montgomery to Jackson, Mississippi. When they arrived in Jackson, the Riders were arrested and the federal government did not protect them.

1 Nov The federal government threatened to use federal officers to enforce desegregation if states continued to refuse to desegregate bus station facilities. The government wanted an end to the violence and the Freedom Rides. So Southern states began to desegregate bus facilities and the Freedom Rides were no longer needed.

15 May The first bus reached Anniston, Alabama and was attacked by over 100 KKK members. Someone threw a firebomb into the bus, but the passengers managed to escape before the bus exploded. Riders on the second bus were also attacked and beaten. In the end, all the Riders were rescued.

20 May Police escorted the Freedom Riders' bus to just outside Montgomery, Alabama, then left the Riders to defend themselves against a white mob at the bus station. They attacked and beat the Riders.

Summer Throughout the summer months there were 60 Freedom Rides. Over 300 Riders were jailed. Many were assaulted by police while in custody.

James Meredith, 1962

Meredith applied to the University of Mississippi after an earlier failed attempt to get a place there. The NAACP brought a successful court case, and the Supreme Court ordered the university to admit him. University officials ignored the Supreme Court's ruling and blocked Meredith from starting.

On 30 September, federal officials escorted Meredith on campus, where some 3000 segregationists attacked them. President Kennedy called for peace. Rioting broke out and many people were injured; some were killed. Federal troops were sent in to stop the rioting. Meredith finally registered on 1 October, but he continued to need armed guards while he completed his university studies.

Now try this

Write **one** paragraph to explain the progress made by civil rights activists, 1960–62.

Think about the campaign methods and the role of the federal authorities. (The information on page 8 about Greensboro would also be helpful when answering this question.)

Peaceful protests and their impact, 1963–65

By 1963, civil rights campaigners were seeking new ways to gain much-needed media attention, in order to put pressure on authorities in Southern states to improve the situation for black Americans there.

Events in Birmingham, 1963

Martin Luther King and the SCLC led the campaign in Birmingham, Alabama. Birmingham was chosen because:

- it was still completely segregated
- the local police chief – ‘Bull’ Connor – had a reputation as someone who could be provoked into violence
- black Americans had regularly been attacked there.

The Birmingham campaign included peaceful marches, sit-ins, boycotts and public meetings. Hundreds of arrests took place, including of young children. With the jails full, Connor ordered the use of water cannon and police dogs to deal with the protesters. This response to the peaceful protests was widely criticised and gained supportive news coverage for the civil rights campaign.

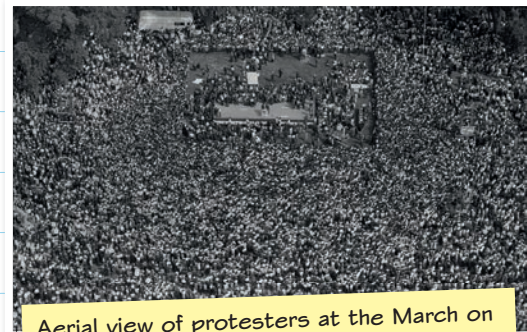


Police with dogs break up a civil rights demonstration in Birmingham, Alabama, 1963. Notice how the man is using a coat to protect his hand from possible dog bites. He does not appear to have seen the police officer with the raised truncheon.

The March on Washington, 1963

In August 1963, after events in Birmingham, Alabama, civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King, organised a march of protesters from across the United States. The ‘March on Washington’ was for ‘Jobs and Freedom’.

- More than 250 000 people took part in the march. Of these, about 40 000 were white Americans.
- The march was peaceful and was broadcast live on television around the world.
- King made his famous ‘I have a dream’ speech.



Aerial view of protesters at the March on Washington, 1963. At the time, this was the largest demonstration in US history.

Freedom Summer, 1964

In 1964 in Mississippi, SNCC and CORE set up the ‘Freedom Summer’. A thousand volunteers went to Mississippi to help boost voter registration.

- Most volunteers were white college students from respectable families. Their social status would make any violence against them more newsworthy.
- They ran voter registration classes to teach black locals about passing the test to register to vote.
- 17 000 black Americans tried to register to vote; only 1600 were successful.
- In retaliation, the Ku Klux Klan burned crosses and set fire to black people’s homes and churches.

Mississippi murders

On 21 June 1964, three activists, Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman (who were white) and James Chaney (who was black) were killed by a Klan lynch mob near Meridian, Mississippi. CORE and SNCC members tried to find the bodies of the murdered men. The bodies were eventually discovered and during the search the bodies of a further eight victims of the Klan were also discovered.

The ‘Mississippi murders’ showed the levels of hatred and violence Klan members used to stop civil rights.

Now try this

Give **two** impacts of each of the following: events in Birmingham, Alabama, 1963; the March on Washington, and the Mississippi Freedom Summer.

Civil rights law, 1964–65

In this period, important breakthroughs were made in passing new civil rights legislation in the USA.

Kennedy and Johnson and their contribution to civil rights laws

President John F. Kennedy, 1961–63



- Selected black people for high-level jobs, including Thurgood Marshall (who successfully argued the 1954 *Brown v. Topeka* case).
- Backed introduction of new civil rights laws after initially being reluctant to support civil rights. He became committed to the cause because of the impact of the civil rights protests and in particular the outrageous treatment of protesters at Birmingham.
- Sent federal troops to the University of Mississippi to protect James Meredith.
- Sent US marshals to escort the Freedom Riders and prevent them being attacked.

President Lyndon B. Johnson, 1963–69



- Continued to appoint black people to high-level jobs, including naming Patricia Harris as US Ambassador to Luxembourg in 1965.
- Urged Southern politicians to support 1964 Civil Rights Bill.
- Supported the 1964 Civil Rights Act and 1965 Voting Rights Act.
- Intervened to escort protesters marching from Selma to Montgomery in 1965.

President Kennedy was assassinated on 22 November 1963 in Dallas, Texas. Lyndon B. Johnson succeeded him as president.

The 1964 Civil Rights Act

- New powers forced school desegregation.
- Government could stop federal funding of state projects that promoted inequality.
- No discrimination in voter registration tests.
- Banned discrimination in public spaces and interstate businesses.
- Banned employment discrimination in larger businesses.
- Set up Equal Employment Opportunities Commission to combat work discrimination.

The Selma to Montgomery marches, 1965

Early in 1965, the SCLC and King decided to campaign for voting rights in Selma, Alabama, to lend support to President Johnson's Voting Rights Act. Some campaigners held protests against voter registration tests while others tried to register to vote. Violence broke out with the police and a protester was killed.

On 7 March, 600 people set out to march 54 miles from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, to publicise the right of black Americans to vote. State troops stopped the protesters outside Selma, using tear gas, clubs and cattle prods. The media reported the violence worldwide.

A second attempt to march from Selma to Montgomery, on 9 March, was unsuccessful. Following the march, a local white group murdered a white civil rights activist, causing public outrage. President Johnson now intervened, placing the Alabama state national guard under federal control and ordering it to give safe passage to the marchers. The third and final march took place on 21–24 March, with 25 000 protesters concluding the march from Selma to Montgomery on 25 March.

The 1965 Voting Rights Act

- Johnson was heavily influenced by the Selma campaign, praising the courage of the activists and seeing the march as a turning point in the fight against racial prejudice and injustice.
- He introduced a standard voting registration process across the USA, controlled by federal government.
 - States could introduce new voting rules only if the federal government agreed.
 - Federal officials would take over voter registration in states where less than 50% of those qualified to vote failed to register.

Now try this

Write **two** paragraphs describing the roles of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson in improving US civil rights in the 1960s.

Malcolm X

Malcolm X was a key figure in the fight for improved civil rights in the USA. He had a different philosophy from that of Martin Luther King and his views influenced Black Power.

For more about King's approach, go to page 5.
Turn to page 13 to revise Black Power.

Malcolm X: his beliefs, methods and involvement with the Black Muslims

He had a troubled upbringing, during which white racists killed his father.

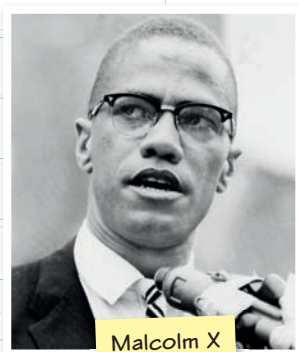
His birth name was Malcolm Little, which he later rejected as a slave name. He replaced 'Little' with 'X' for unknown.

He was involved in crime and illegal drugs in his youth and went to prison, where he joined the **Nation of Islam (NOI)**.

He was an effective public speaker and spoke with conviction and passion.

He thought non-violent direct action would never work, because white society would never consider black Americans as equals.

In a speech in June 1964, he said black people should defend themselves 'by any means necessary'. He criticised those who argued for non-violence; he said white Americans would never allow equality unless forced to do so.



Malcolm X

He became a spokesman for the Nation of Islam, arguing that black and white Americans should live separately. He believed white Americans could not help black Americans achieve equality.

He related well to angry young people in Northern US cities.

He set up the Organization of Afro-American Unity. It aimed to unite all people of African descent and achieve political and economic independence from white Americans.

Members of the Nation of Islam assassinated Malcolm X in 1965.

He left the Nation of Islam in 1964, as he began to challenge NOI's ideas about Islam and race.

Before his death he came to believe integration with whites **might** be possible, as his pilgrimage to Mecca demonstrated that Muslims of different races could be united in their faith.

Nation of Islam, or Black Muslims: A radical group that mixed ideas from Islam with those of black separatism. They believed black Americans needed to create their own separate state, independently of white Americans.

Malcolm X's change of attitude

- Malcolm X left the Nation of Islam in 1964, to start up his own religious group – Muslim Mosque, Inc. (MMI).
- The Nation of Islam now became Malcolm X's enemy and started sending him death threats.
- Malcolm X went on a pilgrimage to Mecca in April 1964 and rejected many of his old beliefs about separatism.
- He decided to work with other civil rights groups and set up the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) in 1964.
- He met SNCC and CORE members to explore the possibility of working together to promote civil rights.

15 000 people attended Malcolm X's funeral on 27 February 1965.

The assassination of Malcolm X



Malcolm X's supporters kneel by him after he is shot 15 times by members of the Nation of Islam while speaking, on 21 February 1965 in Harlem. The Nation of Islam had previously firebombed Malcolm's home a number of times and he needed bodyguards.

Now try this

Create a flowchart to summarise Malcolm X's contribution to the civil rights movement.

Had a look ☐Nearly there ☐Nailed it! ☐Protest and
progress,
1960–75

Black Power, 1963–70

From 1963, some black civil rights groups rejected non-violent methods and instead turned to a more radical approach to civil rights, which they called 'Black Power'.

Why did Black Power emerge?

Rejected non-violence

- Results were too slow and did not have enough impact.
- Integration relied on black Americans fitting into a white society that had treated them very badly.

Ideas

- Influenced by the views of Malcolm X.
- **Demanded** change to improve the position of black Americans rather than **asking** for white Americans to change it.
- Believed that self-defence was justified.
- Wanted black Americans to feel self-respect and pride in their own heritage.



Campaigning

- Focused on wider social issues of poverty and unemployment.
- Got involved in wider campaigns like the anti-Vietnam War movement.

The Black Power salute was a raised clenched fist. It represented strength and intimidated those who were scared to talk about a violent revolution to achieve black equality in the USA. In October 1966, Stokely Carmichael defended the term 'Black Power', which his supporters chanted at demonstrations.

Significance of Stokely Carmichael

- After 1965, SNCC continued with the drive for voter registration. Yet many black Americans were dissatisfied that no political parties focused on black rights.
- Stokely Carmichael helped set up the Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO) as a party to concentrate on issues most affecting black Americans. The party logo was a panther, and it became a symbol of black rights.
- In May 1966, Carmichael became Chairman of SNCC. He wanted a more radical approach to equality. More Black Power supporters joined SNCC and campaigned in the North, particularly in poor Northern ghettos.
- A 220-mile 'March against Fear' took place in Mississippi, in June 1966. On the second day, the walk's organiser, James Meredith, was shot and hospitalised, so King and Stokely Carmichael led it. King argued for non-violence but Carmichael's more radical speeches called for Black Power.

Significance of the 1968 Mexico Olympics

The 1968 Mexico Olympics provided an opportunity for black American athletes to show their support for Black Power. Tommie Smith and John Carlos won gold and bronze in the 200 metres. In the medals ceremony they raised their fists in the Black Power salute. They were widely criticised in the media and were banned from the team. However, many young black Americans admired them for taking this stand and making their political views clear in such a public way.

The Black Panthers

- Set up in 1966 by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale.
- Originally called 'The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense'.
- Believed black people needed black officials and black police to support the community.
- Prepared to work with white people holding the same beliefs.
- Had a radical 'ten-point plan' for transforming society, including the end of capitalism, free healthcare and the end of all wars.
- Uniform was a black beret, black trousers and black leather jacket.
- Carried guns for self-defence and tape recorders – to record police harassment.
- Set up breakfast clubs for poor black children, provided free shoes and medical services.



The Black Panthers were successful in providing black Americans living in poverty with financial help, but their ultimate goal of a radical social and economic revolution in the USA was not achieved.

Now try this

Draw and complete a table about Black Power. Include 'Ideas' in one column and 'Achievements' in another.

Remember, the term Black Power refers to a range of black American groups, including SNCC and the Black Panthers. Some groups were more radical than others.

The civil rights movement, 1965–75

There were successes and failures for the civil rights movement in the period from 1965–75. In 1968, King was assassinated and President Johnson published the Kerner Report into rioting.

The riots of 1964–67

- Between 1964 and 1968, there were 329 major riots in 257 Northern US cities.
- The riots began in New York City in July 1964, when a policeman shot a young black man. They were a reaction to ghetto conditions and violence during the Freedom Summer of 1964.
- There were riots in the Watts district of Los Angeles in August 1965. These were a response to police violence, ghetto conditions and the events in Selma that year.
- Riots followed every year in the summer months in different cities, mainly in the North, including Chicago and Cleveland in 1966, and Newark and Detroit in 1967.

Long-term causes: Black Americans lived unequal lives compared with white Americans. This led to anger and despair. They endured lower standards of education and discrimination from police and local officials.
Short-term causes: Specific incidents, such as a shooting, triggered each riot.

To read more about the Freedom Summer of 1964, turn to page 10. For more information on events in Selma during 1965, go to page 11.

The Kerner Report, 1968

Set up by Johnson in 1967, its findings were:

- the riots were the consequence of poor living conditions in the ghettos and the failure to respond to black complaints about them
- African Americans should be listened to and properly involved in resolving the problems
- policing methods must change because black communities do not trust the police
- policing during the riots made things worse
- money provided for improved living conditions and opportunities had not been spent on planned improvements, just on more police
- the media had exaggerated the riots.

King moves North

In 1966, King and the SCLC moved the focus of their campaigning to the North. Yet they struggled to connect with people in Northern cities. Their campaign began in Chicago, where they focused on fairer housing, but faced setbacks.

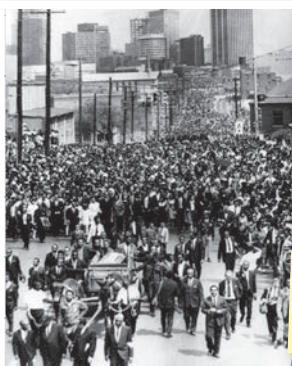
- The local mayor agreed to discussions and sounded reasonable, but did not act.
- Riots broke out and media coverage was negative. This did not help their cause.
- King's outspoken criticism of the USA's involvement in Vietnam meant the president was less supportive of him.

The assassination of Martin Luther King and its impact

King was shot and killed by James Earl Ray on his hotel balcony in Memphis, Tennessee, on 4 April 1968. There were violent responses to his murder across the USA, including rioting in Washington and Cleveland. James Earl Ray was given a long prison sentence. After the assassination:

The 1968 Civil Rights Act focused on fair housing and provided federal protection to civil rights workers.

Civil rights groups lost funding and membership – with civil rights laws, many white Americans saw the battle for civil rights as over.



Many white Americans related to King as a moderate. His death increased white opposition to black demands for equality.

Many black Americans became more radical after King's death, as they were increasingly impatient about the slow pace of change.

The funeral procession of Martin Luther King, in Atlanta, 9 April 1968. Over 100 000 mourners joined the procession.

Now try this

Write a description of King's campaign in the North. It should be no more than 200 words long.

Had a look ☐Nearly there ☐Nailed it! ☐Protest and
progress,
1960–75

Civil rights achievements up to 1975

By 1975 there had been significant progress in many areas of civil rights in the USA. However, in many ways racial equality remained a long way off.

Progress in US civil rights, 1969–74

Nixon's presidency saw the following changes for civil rights:

- 👍 Increased training for black people setting up businesses in black areas.
- 👍 Favourable tax terms to white-owned businesses that expanded into black areas.
- 👍 Job equality promoted by encouraging 'affirmative action' – the deliberate selection of a black person for a job.
- 👍 More black officials working in the White House.
- 🗣️ Nixon wanted black voters to vote for him, but balanced this against those white voters that he knew were still opposed to civil rights. He therefore portrayed improved civil rights to white voters as a means to control the black rioters, rather than arguing that it was their entitlement.
- 🗣️ Nixon has been criticised for patronising black Americans by presenting the promotion of black home ownership as a way to stop black Americans destroying property.



African Black Panther Party for civil rights meets at the Capitol, Washington, November 1975.

Examples of progress made:

- By 1970, 700 black elected officials were in office in the Southern states, a rise from only 25 in 1964.
- In 1973, Maynard Jackson was elected Atlanta's first African-American mayor.

What progress did the civil rights movement achieve by 1975?

Significant progress in **desegregation** was achieved, including in schools, transport and restaurants.

However, the campaigns to achieve **economic equality**, such as King's Poor People's Campaign and the campaigns of the Black Panthers, did not see a reduction in economic inequality. By the 1970s, the gap between the richest and poorest in the USA still depended on race. Black Americans still tended to have worse employment chances and were paid less for the work they did.

Turn to page 13 to find out more about the campaigns of the Black Panthers.

How did the federal government lead progress in civil rights, 1965–75?

In the early 1950s, the federal government and civil rights campaigners had hoped that enforced changes through the use of new laws would cause a change in attitude and that desegregation would spread quickly. However, by 1970, desegregation was not consistent and sometimes did not actually improve the situation for black Americans in real terms. For example, in some ways black schools had been better than integrated schools in terms of outcomes for black students.

Federal government continued to introduce new civil rights legislation. For example:

- the 1970 Voting Rights Act banned state literacy tests in all states
- the 1975 revision to the Voting Rights Act explicitly included other racial minorities.

Now try this

Draw up a table with two headings: 'Progress made in civil rights, 1965–75' and 'More progress needed'. Write down **three** examples under each of your headings.

US involvement in Vietnam, 1954–61

The US war in Vietnam was long and controversial. Conflict had been continuing between France and Vietnam since 1946. When the French finally withdrew in August 1954, the USA became heavily involved for a number of reasons.

Dien Bien Phu and French withdrawal

- After the end of the Second World War, France wanted to regain its former colony Vietnam.
- The Vietminh, led by Ho Chi Minh, wanted independence, and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) was declared. The Vietminh had control of the north of Vietnam, while the French controlled the south. Fighting broke out between the two sides.
- In 1949, China became a communist country. China supported the Vietminh by giving supplies, advisers and troops.
- The USA began to send the French supplies, military advisers and soldiers. However, the soldiers were ordered not to actually fight because the USA was reluctant to get openly involved in the war.
- By 1954, US support was so strong it paid 80 per cent of the cost of France's war with the Vietminh.
- The French and the Vietminh fought a major battle at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. After 55 days of fighting the French were forced to surrender due to the strength of the Vietminh. This defeat was significant in leading the French to withdraw from Vietnam.
- The Geneva Conference (1954) attempted to restore peace. The Geneva Accords divided Vietnam into two countries along the 17th parallel, separated by a demilitarised zone where no soldiers were permitted.
- North Vietnam (the Democratic Republic of Vietnam) was led by Ho Chi Minh. South Vietnam (the State of Vietnam) was led by the US-backed ruler Bao Dai until 1955, when Ngo Dinh Diem became president.



Vietnam and the neighbouring countries that were involved in the conflict.

Reasons for greater US involvement in Vietnam

1 Eisenhower and the 'domino theory'

The USA had a great fear about the spread of communism. Eisenhower was worried that if Vietnam became communist, other countries in the region would follow. This was called the 'domino theory'.

Eisenhower set up the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) in September 1954. Its aim was to stop the spread of communism in Southeast Asia. SEATO included the USA, Britain, France and five other countries; they all agreed to act collectively to stop the spread of communism.

2 Weaknesses of Diem's government

Diem's unpopular government was corrupt, and it had little respect for the rural population and Buddhists (South Vietnam was mostly Buddhist, but Diem was Catholic).

Different revolutionary groups developed in South Vietnam to fight against Diem's government. They were collectively called the 'Vietcong' (or VC - short for 'Vietnamese Communists'). North Vietnam backed the VC and there was a civil war. Eisenhower supported Diem by sending advisers to train the South Vietnamese army (ARVN) to fight the VC. Eisenhower did not want to risk nuclear war with China and the USSR by sending US troops.

Now try this

Give **three** reasons why US involvement in Vietnam increased up to 1961.

Had a look ☐Nearly there ☐Nailed it! ☐
**War in
Vietnam,
1954–75**

Kennedy and Vietnam, 1961–63

Under President Kennedy (1961–63), there was greater US involvement in the conflict in Vietnam. Kennedy used a range of tactics to win the war but these had limited success.

Kennedy became US President in 1961. He agreed with the domino theory.

He wanted to avoid direct military action in Vietnam.

He recognised the Vietcong (VC) were gaining ground.

He sent more advisers to South Vietnam (around 16 000 more by late 1963).



President Kennedy, 1961–63

He authorised use of chemical sprays, such as Agent Orange, to kill crops and jungle areas the VC were hiding in from 1961 (Operation Ranch Hand).

He changed tactics to searching for VC fighters, not just trying to draw them into battle.

In 1961, Kennedy requested a report on the feasibility of sending in US soldiers for active service in Vietnam.

US concerns leading to Diem's overthrow

Kennedy had concerns about Diem's effectiveness as leader of South Vietnam.

- Kennedy believed that the VC were being beaten, but in January 1963, the ARVN lost the Battle of Ap Bac, even though it had US air support and five times as many soldiers as the VC.
- The US media reported the battle as a defeat, despite government attempts to present it positively; Kennedy worried about the negative publicity of Diem's leadership.
- On 6 May, Diem's government troops fired on a Buddhist procession, killing nine, which added to Diem's unpopularity among the Vietnamese people.
- On 11 June, a Buddhist monk burned himself to death (self-immolated) in protest about Diem's government. His protest generated worldwide publicity.
- Kennedy put pressure on Diem's government to make peace with the Buddhists, but Diem continued to persecute them.
- Kennedy did not want to publicly depose Diem, despite knowing how unpopular he was, but he made it obvious that he had withdrawn all support for his leadership. He now knew Diem's government would never be democratic.
- In November 1963, ARVN generals overthrew and assassinated Diem; the USA did not intervene to prevent this.

Kennedy felt the US government had a responsibility to help protect the new South Vietnam government from the spread of communism. He considered greater US military involvement in Vietnam, but wanted to help build a new democracy there. He wanted the new government to persuade the population to support its aims, rather than use repression.

The Strategic Hamlet Program, 1962

Diem and the USA built new villages to house locals away from the Vietcong, so the VC could not recruit them to fight. The aim was to provide security for the villagers and create support for the government. The hamlets were also supposed to have schools and medical centres.

The ARVN forcibly removed and relocated villagers. However, the villagers did not want to leave their ancestral homes. Also, there was not enough food or basic provisions in some of the new villages and many villagers starved to death. The program made Diem and the USA more unpopular in South Vietnam.



A fortified Vietnamese hamlet, 1963

Now try this

Describe **three** methods used by Kennedy to prevent the spread of communism in Vietnam.

Escalation of the conflict under Johnson

Under President Johnson (1963–69), the conflict in Vietnam escalated dramatically for a number of reasons. The Gulf of Tonkin incident in 1964 was central to increased US involvement in Vietnam.

Johnson becomes president, 1963

Johnson's aims	Johnson's problems
Stop the spread of communism.	The communists in Vietnam were getting stronger and harder to defeat.
Establish democratic government in South Vietnam supported by the people.	The government of South Vietnam was very weak and unpopular.
Ensure that the situation did not deteriorate into a nuclear war.	The USSR was a superpower with nuclear capability.

The Gulf of Tonkin incident, 1964

In August 1964, two US naval ships reported attacks by North Vietnamese torpedo boats off the North Vietnamese coast.

Causes	Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased build-up of US advisers in South Vietnam under Johnson. Regular US patrols by ships, such as <i>Maddox</i> and <i>C. Turner Joy</i> in Gulf of Tonkin. US involvement in ARVN raids on North Vietnam. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Johnson ordered air strikes against North Vietnam. Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, allowing Johnson to use armed force to defend South Vietnam and US troops already stationed there. In response, the North Vietnamese expanded their involvement in South Vietnam.



President Johnson signing the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, 10 August 1964. This gave him power to escalate the war in Vietnam without consulting Congress following the Gulf of Tonkin incident. This meant that the lack of support for the war from Congress could be overcome.

Increasing threat of the Vietcong

- The Vietcong (VC) became more organised and effective, and their numbers increased.
- Some of the VC's ideas were popular among ordinary Vietnamese, who sympathised with their view of Americans as imperialists wanting to control Vietnam for their own ends.
- Many South Vietnamese were angry with the government for its dealings with the USA and policies such as the Strategic Hamlet Program.
- They received support from North Vietnam, which sent supplies and weapons to them (mostly provided by the USSR and China).
- Many rural South Vietnamese supported the VC. The increased support from civilians made the threat of the VC more extensive.

The Ho Chi Minh Trail

The North Vietnamese with China's help supported the VC in South Vietnam by sending troops and weapons via the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

The trail was a network of paths and smaller trails, which connected North and South Vietnam (often passing through Laos and Cambodia). It took about a month to get from one end to the other.

Over time the paths on the trail became wider and easier to use to send more support. By 1974, some parts of the trail were properly paved and dotted along the route there were underground hospitals, and fuel and weapons stores.

While the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution stopped short of being an official declaration of war, it had the same outcome.

Remember that this is a summary: focus on the key points.

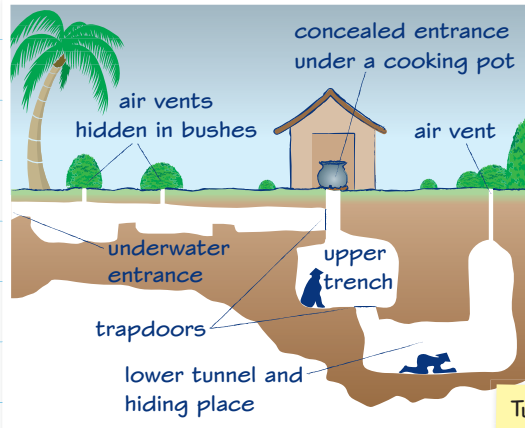
Now try this

Create a flowchart to sum up why the war in Vietnam escalated under President Johnson.

Conflict in Vietnam, 1964–68

The USA, the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong used very different tactics to try to secure victory.

Guerrilla tactics of the Vietcong



Tunnels allowed the VC to organise surprise attacks, store their supplies safely, hide securely and treat the wounded.

The Vietcong (VC) used a range of methods:

- planned ambushes
- set simple, but deadly traps
- did not wear military uniform so integrated with rural peasants
- stayed close to US deployments of soldiers so they couldn't be bombed easily
- sabotaged roads and bridges to make it difficult for the enemy to move around
- avoided open battles
- blended in with the local population so it was hard for members to be identified – could be male, female, young or old.

Operation Rolling Thunder

Early in 1965, there were still no US soldiers on the ground in Vietnam. Johnson wanted to force the North Vietnamese to negotiate a settlement so, in February 1965, the USA started a bombing campaign in North Vietnam called Operation Rolling Thunder.

Johnson resisted calls from the military to bomb extensively. So Rolling Thunder began gradually, near to South Vietnam. It targeted the Ho Chi Minh Trail, to stop supplies being taken south, and North Vietnam's small industrial base. Johnson avoided the capital Hanoi, the port Haiphong (where the USSR sent supplies into North Vietnam) and the border area with China, to avoid the war escalating and China and the USSR becoming more involved.

US tactic of 'search and destroy'

- Small groups of US soldiers tracked down VC camps then called in helicopters to spray chemicals on them and bomb them.
- The VC often left traps on the ground to kill or injure US soldiers.
- If any VC remained in the area, they used 'hit and run' attacks on US troops instead of fighting any battles.
- US troops destroyed any VC tunnels, weapons and supplies that they found.
- However, after US troops left the area, the VC returned. This sent out the message that US search and destroy methods were failing.
- The use of chemical sprays, and bombing of crops and homes made the USA unpopular with locals.

Tet Offensive, 1968

- Led by the North Vietnamese and VC in January–February 1968. Over 100 cities and US bases in South Vietnam were attacked.
- Initially, the North Vietnamese and VC drew US and ARVN troops away from cities and military bases by attacking the demilitarised zone.
- The North Vietnamese also suggested a negotiated settlement, which made the US think the communists were losing.
- On 30 January, North Vietnamese troops and the VC attacked high-profile places in Saigon, such as the US embassy, airport and radio station.
- The attack in Saigon was defeated, but US citizens were shocked at events.
- Eventually, US and ARVN troops recaptured the cities and bases that were attacked and the communists suffered very heavy losses (the VC were almost wiped out). However, the American public saw the Tet Offensive as a terrible failure.

Chemical weapons



The US sprayed large areas of Vietnam with chemicals, such as napalm, to destroy jungle and crops. The chemicals caused birth defects and widespread starvation.

Now try this

List the different tactics used by the Vietcong. Describe **one** positive or negative effect of each.

Changes under Nixon, 1969–73

President Nixon worked on several different approaches to get the USA out of Vietnam. However he still wanted to ensure that South Vietnam did not become a communist-led country.

The Nixon Doctrine

On 25 July 1969, President Nixon put forward his ideas about Vietnam, Southeast Asia and the USA – known as the Nixon Doctrine.

- The USA would follow through on any existing support it had promised its allies and help them against nuclear attacks.
- However, from now on the United States would only provide financial help and training against threats from countries that did not have nuclear capacity – it would not provide soldiers.

In the USA, public opinions differed about Vietnamisation. Some supported the aims of the war and wanted to continue with active involvement. Others wanted American withdrawal as soon as possible.

Key features of Vietnamisation

Putting the ideas behind the Nixon Doctrine into practice was called Vietnamisation.

- Nixon wanted US troops to withdraw from Vietnam, while also giving the appearance the USA had not lost the war.
- The South Vietnamese army (ARVN) was to take over more of the actual fighting, thus reducing the number of US military deaths.
- The US government's focus was now to send money and advisers, not soldiers.
- The US government's aim was to ensure South Vietnam remained an independent, non-communist country – in this way the USA would not lose face over the outcomes in Vietnam.

Vietnamisation failed because US training and equipment was not enough to ensure the ARVN was ready to take over the fighting. The ARVN also suffered from corruption and desertion.

US troops withdraw from Vietnam

Most Americans wanted US troops to come home. Troops began to be withdrawn from 1968 onwards. Once soldiers knew they would soon be leaving, their desire to fight was severely reduced. Many tried to avoid battle and some killed their officers to stop them leading them into situations where their lives were at risk. Drug use also rocketed among US troops.

Attacks on Cambodia, 1970, and Laos, 1971

In 1970, despite creating public hostility, Nixon sent US troops to Cambodia to stop the North Vietnamese from helping Cambodia's communists to power there. Congress was outraged and cancelled the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. Congress also reduced money for war and demanded faster troop reductions from Vietnam.

Turn to page 18 for more information on the Gulf of Tonkin incident and resolution of 1964.

In 1971, the USA gave air support for a South Vietnamese invasion of Laos, to stop the spread of communism there. There was bloody fighting between North and South Vietnamese soldiers in Laos. The South Vietnamese did not fight well, increasing doubts about their ability to hold back communism in South Vietnam after US troops went home.

Bombing of North Vietnam, 1972

- In April 1972, the USA bombed North Vietnam in heavy air raids to weaken it.
- All areas were targeted and mines were dropped into Haiphong harbour to stop supplies from China and the USSR coming by sea.
- Radio and communications were destroyed.
- The North Vietnamese war industry was severely damaged.
- The bombing led to calls from the USSR and China for North Vietnam to sign a peace deal.

Go to page 24 for details of the peace deal.

Now try this

Summarise key information about Nixon's approach in Vietnam from 1969 to 1972 on a timeline.