

## Free without rights?



1929

When Martin Luther King was born in 1929 the United States had already abolished slavery in 1865, but Blacks like him did not have the same rights as white Americans. Blacks were able to vote (since 1870) but they suffered discrimination in jobs, where they were paid less than whites for the same work. Segregation was allowed in schools, trains, buses and other public places.



1954

Segregation in schools and universities ended officially. Schools had to allow black students in all their classes, and universities were not allowed to ban black students. The Civil Rights Movement (CRM) started to fight for equal rights for Blacks in all areas of life.



1955

Rosa Parks didn't give up her seat to a white person in the 'colored' part of a bus. The police arrested her. As a protest the black people in Montgomery, Alabama, all decided not to use the bus service. In Dec. 1956 the bus service ended segregation on its buses.



1957

Martin Luther King and others founded a protest group which was against violence. Many black students weren't able to enter their school because state officers stopped them. The National Guard had to help one group, called the 'Little Rock Nine', to get in. For a whole year they got violent threats but some of them were still able to graduate.



1963

Pictures of police brutality against members of a black protest group in the South made people around the world support the CRM. About 200,000 people went on a 'March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom'. Martin Luther King gave his famous 'I have a dream' speech at the end of the march.

A law was passed which said that discrimination because of race, colour, religion or origin was not allowed. Murders of civil rights workers continued.

M. L. King got the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize because he fought with words and not with violence.

Malcolm X, another popular black leader, thought people should use violence in the struggle for equal rights. He was killed in NYC in 1965 while he was giving a speech.



LA, California, Aug. 1965. Race riots broke out in a black part of the city.

1968

Memphis, Tennessee, 4th April. Martin Luther King was shot dead. His murder led to riots in many cities all over the world. Malcolm X's ideas were carried on by black students who started a group called 'Black Power'. They felt it was OK to use violence if they had to.

Today

Discrimination because of race is banned by law in the US today. Black Americans work in all areas of society and they can get top positions in firms and the government. Finally the doors of the White House have been opened for them. But many poor black Americans still have a tough life. There are still reports every week of discrimination and police brutality.

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### 1 Your civil rights

- a) Before you read: Which of these rights do you have to use public transport? to vote? to go to school? to protest peacefully? to carry a gun?
- b) What other rights do you have in your country?

### 2 Key words

- a) Skim the text and find the key words:

- working without pay or rights
  - what some people suffer in jobs for example
  - a rule which makes one group sit for example on different seats
  - the place or country that you come from
  - violent protests by a crowd of people
- b) Use the key words from a) to write 5–8 sentences about the CRM.

### 3 Before and now

- Today in the US no one may own another pet but until 1865 people were allowed to ...
- Today all US citizens can vote but before 1870 Blacks ...
- Today Blacks must get the same pay as White until 1964 Blacks ...
- Today Blacks can go to all schools and univer but before 1954 they ...
- Today bus companies may not segregate Black and Whites but until 1955 they ...

### 4 Presentation: A quiz

- a) Your group writes each date (in red) together key words (in blue) on a piece of paper and put them in a box.
- b) Write notes about each date and key word on large piece of paper.
- c) The others in the class each choose a piece of from the box in turn. They ask questions about dates and key words.
- d) Your group uses its notes and tells the class what happened on each date.