

Key Events in the American Civil Rights Movement

Event	Date	Significance
14th Amendment passed	1868	Constitutional amendment forbids any state from depriving citizens of their rights and privileges and defines citizenship
<i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> decision	1896	Supreme Court rules that separate but equal facilities for different races is legal. Gives legal approval to Jim Crow laws
Booker T. Washington writes <i>Up From Slavery</i>	1901	Arguing that gradual progress is the best path for blacks, Washington focuses on job training and suggests that self-respect and self-help would bring opportunities
Niagara Movements	1905	W.E.B. DuBois demands immediate racial equality and opposes all laws that treats blacks as different from others. Leads to creation of NAACP in 1909
Grandfather clause outlawed by Supreme Court	1915	NAACP successfully challenges state laws that restricted black voting registration
Race riots and lynchings claim hundreds of lives	1919	Over 25 race riots occur in the summer of 1919 with 38 killed in Chicago. 70 blacks, including 10 veterans, are lynched in the South
Executive Order 8802 forbids race discrimination in hiring	June 1941	FDR sets up Fair Employment Practices Commission to assure non-discrimination policies in federal hiring
Japanese-Americans sent to concentration camps	1942	Concerned over potential disloyalty, FDR allows 110,000 to be rounded up in western states (though not in Hawaii)
<i>Korematsu v. U.S.</i>	1944	Supreme Court rules that concentration camps were a wartime necessity
Jackie Robinson joins Brooklyn Dodgers	1947	Pasadena resident and UCLA alum Robinson breaks the color barrier by being the first black to play major league baseball in modern times
Armed forces integrated	1948	Pres. Truman issues executive order requiring integrated units in the armed forces
<i>Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka</i> decision	1954	Supreme Court reverses Plessy by stating that separate schools are by nature unequal. Schools are ordered to desegregate "with all deliberate speed"
Southern Manifesto urges resistance to desegregation efforts	1956	Over 100 southern members of Congress sign document attacking the Supreme Court decision. Only Lyndon Johnson, Estes Kefauver, and Albert Gore refuse to join protest
Little Rock Central High School desegregated	Fall 1957	After Little Rock school board votes to integrate schools, National Guard troops prevent black children from attending school. 1000 federal paratroopers are needed to escort black students and preserve peace. Arkansas Gov. Faubus responds by closing schools for 1958-59 school year
Montgomery bus boycott	1955-1957	Rosa Parks ignites 381-day bus boycott organized by Martin Luther King, Jr.
Freedom riders oppose segregation	1961	Blacks and whites take buses to the South to protest bus station segregation. Many are greeted with riots and beatings
James Meredith enrolls at the University of Mississippi	1962	5000 federal troops are sent by Pres. Kennedy to allow Meredith to register for classes. Riots result in 2 deaths and hundreds of injuries
Desegregation drive in Birmingham	April 1963	King and SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference) oppose local laws that support segregation. Riots, fire-bombing, and police are used against protestors

"Letter from Birmingham jail"	April 16, 1963	In response to white ministers who urge him to stop causing disturbances, King issues articulate statement of nonviolent resistance to wrongs of American society
Gov. Wallace stops desegregation of the University of Alabama	June 1963	Standing in the schoolhouse door and promising segregation "today, tomorrow, and forever," Wallace is forced by Pres. Kennedy to allow blacks to enroll
Medgar Evers murdered	June 11, 1963	Head of Mississippi NAACP is shot outside his home on the same night that Pres. Kennedy addresses the nation on race, asking "Are we to say to the world...that this is a land of the free except for Negroes"
March on Washington	August 28, 1963	More than 200,000 blacks and whites gather before Lincoln Memorial to hear speeches (including King's "I Have a Dream") and protest racial injustice
Bombing of Birmingham church	September 1963	4 black girls are killed by bomb planted in church
24th Amendment passed	January 1964	Poll tax (which had been used to prevent blacks from voting) outlawed. Black voter registration increases and candidates begin to turn away from white supremacy views in attempt to attract black voters
Civil Rights Act passed	July 1964	Overcoming Senate filibuster, Congress passes law forbidding racial discrimination in many areas of life, including hotels, voting, employment, and schools
Mississippi Summer Freedom Project	Summer 1964	Civil rights workers seek to register blacks to vote. 3 are killed and many black homes and churches are burned. National outrage helps pass civil rights legislation
Selma to Montgomery march	March 1965	King leads 54-mile march to support black voter registration. Despite attacks from police and interference from Gov. Wallace, marchers reach Montgomery. Pres. Johnson addresses nation in support of marchers
Voting Rights Act approved	August 6, 1965	After passage, southern black voter registration grows by over 50% and black officials are elected to various positions. In Mississippi, black voter registration grew from 7% to 67%
Watts Riots	August 1965	In first of more than 100 riots, Los Angeles black suburb erupts in riots, burning, looting, and 34 deaths
Malcolm X assassinated	February 1965	Rejecting integration and nonviolence, Malcolm splits off from Elijah Muhammad's Black Muslims and is killed by black opponents
Race riots in Detroit and Newark	1967	Worst riots in U.S. history results in 43 deaths in Detroit and federal troops being called out to restore order
King assassinated	April 4, 1968	While supporting sanitation workers' strike which had been marred by violence in Memphis, King is shot by James Earl Ray. Riots result in 125 cities
<i>Bakke v. Regents of University of California</i> decision	1978	Supreme Court rules that fixed racial quotas are illegal after Allan Bakke is denied admission to UC Davis medical school even though his grades and scores were higher than most minority applicants admitted
Los Angeles riots	May 1992	Following acquittal of officers who beat Rodney King, 600 buildings are torched and 50 people killed, and \$1 billion in damage recorded