

Civil Rights Timeline Background Information

1. 1954 — **Oliver Brown vs Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas**

The United States Supreme Court ruled that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. The judges voted unanimously.

2. 1955 — **Montgomery Bus Boycott**

Rosa Parks, a resident of Montgomery Alabama, was arrested for not giving up her seat on the bus for a white man. As a result, a group of people, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., planned the Montgomery Bus Boycott to protest the arrest. Later that year the US Supreme Court ruled that the law segregating busses was unconstitutional.

3. 1957 — **Desegregation at Little Rock, Arkansas**

Although nine black students were supposed to begin classes at Little Rock Central High School on September 3, they were not able to start school until September 25. Groups of local residents violently protested the students attending the school and prevented them from entering the building or attending classes. President Eisenhower sent nearly 11,000 troops to Little Rock to ensure that the students attended school safely.

4. 1960 — **Sit-in Campaigns**

Inspired by a black college student (Joseph McNeill) and his friends in Greensboro, North Carolina, groups of people around the country began a type of protest called a “sit-in.” When a drug store refused to serve lunch to McNeill, he and his friends would return to the store day after day and sit peacefully at the counter.

5. 1961 — **Freedom Rides**

1961 saw the beginning of another type of protest — Freedom Rides. Groups of both white and black people would ride busses across the southern states in an effort to end segregation.

6. 1962 — **Riot in Mississippi**

Two students were killed at the University of Mississippi when James Meredith became the first black student to attend classes at the school.

Civil Rights Timeline Background Information (continued)

7. 1963 — March in Birmingham, Alabama

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and two of his colleagues organized fellow protesters to march in Birmingham, Alabama. King, and the Reverends Abernathy and Shuttlesworth, were arrested and sent to jail.

8. 1963 — March on Washington

Nearly 200,000 people marched in Washington, DC where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his famous “I Have a Dream” speech.

9. Selma to Montgomery March

During the month of March, demonstrators marched three times in Alabama. Two marches were met with violence, and one protester was killed. Dr. King led the 3rd march to Selma successfully.