

Questions About Civil Rights and BLM

As you answer these questions, pay particular attention to the underlined words, making sure you understand their significance. Do an Internet search for words that you would like to understand better.

1. In what ways were African Americans discriminated against in the 1940s and 1950s?
2. Why did blacks decide to boycott buses in Montgomery? What tactics were used in Montgomery that were important for the later civil rights movement? What role did Rosa Parks play?
3. Martin Luther King Jr. was the most eloquent spokesman for the civil rights movement. Explain the importance of these King statements: (a) "Sweep streets like Beethoven composed music"; (b) blacks "live within two concentric circles of segregation"; (c) "God's companionship does not stop at the door of a jail cell"; (d) "Freedom is never given voluntarily by the oppressor"; (e) "We find it difficult to wait"; and (f) "One day the South will recognize its real heroes."
4. Why was Birmingham chosen as a target for civil rights action, and why was victory there so important to Martin Luther King Jr.?
5. In what ways did segregationists try to resist the civil rights movement? How did their resistance affect the movement?
6. Why did John F. Kennedy decide to take a stand for civil rights legislation?
7. In what ways did the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s improve conditions for blacks? In what respects were blacks still disadvantaged in relationship to other Americans?
8. Why did so many African Americans abandon King's ideals of nonviolence and racial harmony after 1965?
9. What does equal civil rights guarantee to all citizens of a country? For example, we might all agree that voting is covered under civil rights. What about the right to enough food to eat? What else should be guaranteed civil rights?

10. Countries can always make improvements. What would you say is the greatest way that the United States can improve the civil rights of its citizens in the 21st century?
11. Is there a group of people whose rights are marginalized (most diminished, or least respected), right now? If so, which? Think about racial, gender, ethnic, or other groupings.
12. What is the best way to advocate for (support) the rights of marginalized people today?
13. Many of our civil rights are declared and protected in the Bill of Rights (the first 10 Amendments) in the Constitution. If you could add one protection to the Bill of Rights, what would it be?
14. Read this article--
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/08/24/i-was-a-civil-rights-activist-in-the-1960s-but-its-hard-for-me-to-get-behind-black-lives-matter/-->
and respond to the following questions: (1) what is the primary message of the Black Lives Matter movement (BLM); (2) what are some similarities between the BLM and the Civil Rights movement; (3) what are some differences; (4) why do you think the United States is still grappling with issues of racial discrimination today . . . and what can be done to reduce racial prejudices and discrimination in America?